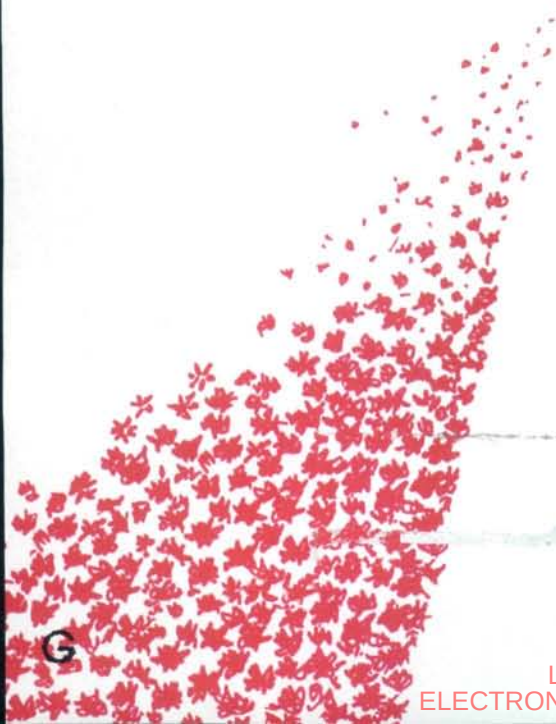


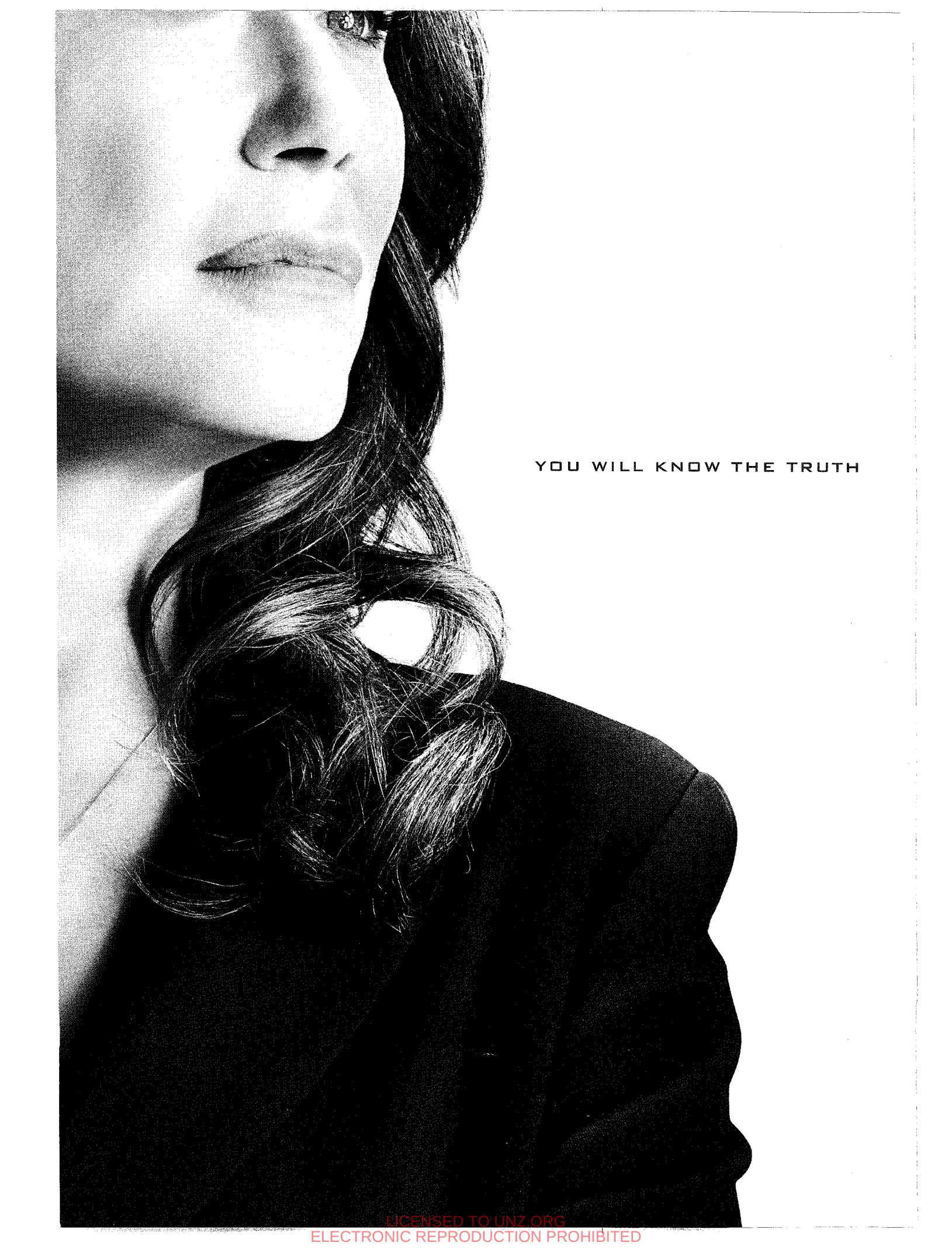
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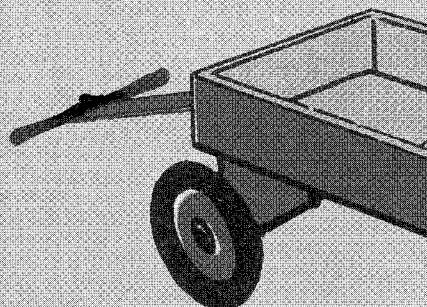
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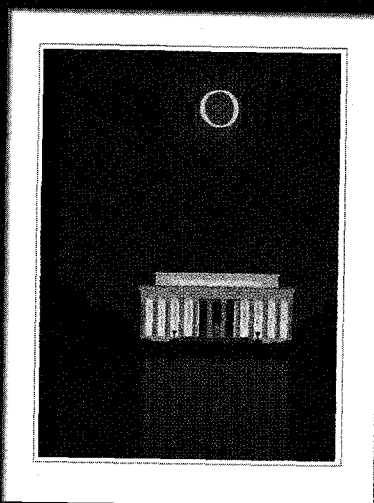
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REFLECTION

by Bob Staake
Issue date: November 17, 2008



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CONTRIBUTORS

Jill Lepore ("Baby Food," p. 34), a professor of history at Harvard, recently published a novel, "Blindspot," written with Jane Kamensky.

Hendrik Hertzberg (Comment, p. 21), the author of "Politics: Observations & Arguments," writes frequently about politics and policy. He also writes a blog on newyorker.com.

Judith Thurman ("Spreading the Word," p. 26) is a staff writer. Her book "Cleopatra's Nose: 39 Varieties of Desire," a collection of *New Yorker* essays, is available in paperback.

Alec Wilkinson (The Talk of the Town, p. 25) will publish his ninth book, "The Protest Singer: An Intimate Portrait of Pete Seeger," in April.

Ben Greenman (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 32) edits the Goings On About Town section. He is the author of several books of fiction, including "Correspondences," a collection of short stories, and "Please Step Back," a novel, which is due out in May.

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Mariana Cook (Portfolio, p. 50) has published seven books of photographs, including "Close at Hand." Her next book, "Mathematicians: An Outer View of the Inner World," comes out in June.

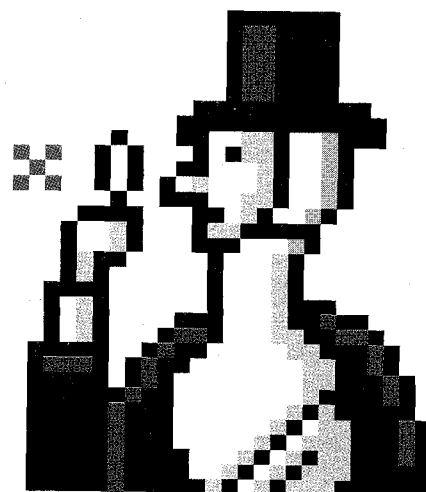
Antonya Nelson (Fiction, p. 64) is the author of six story collections, including "Nothing Right," which comes out next month.

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Guy Billout (Cover) is an illustrator whose work appears regularly in the magazine. "The Frog Who Wanted to See the Sea" is his most recent picture book for children.

THIS WEEK ON NEWYORKER.COM

Audio: A roundtable conversation about Barack Obama, the economy, and domestic security, hosted by *Dorothy Wickenden*. / *Judith Thurman* talks about her Scrabble obsession. / *Thomas McGuane* reads a James Salter story on the monthly fiction podcast. / *Jill Lepore* takes readers' questions about breast-feeding. / The Book Bench, the Cartoon Lounge, Goings On, plus blogs by *Steve Coll*, *Hendrik Hertzberg*, *George Packer*, *James Surowiecki*, and *Sasha Frere-Jones*. / From the archives: *Brendan Gill* and *St. Clair McKelway* on Scrabble, plus every issue back to 1925. / Animated cartoons and the caption contest.



THE MAIL

TACKLING EDUCATION

Malcolm Gladwell looks to the National Football League and financial-services firms for answers to how we might solve our shortage of effective teachers ("Most Likely to Succeed," December 15th). Pro quarterbacks are in the business of outscoring the competition. Financial analysts pick winners. Both groups worry about watching their backs; for neither is there ever any ambiguity about the desired outcome. If that's what we want from our schools, then it makes sense to screen teachers—and students—the same way. But, if the job involves fostering potential and participation and preparing young people as much for citizenship and the examined life as for the marketplace or the field of battle, then perhaps the problem isn't really one of selection at all. Teachers require the same kind of cultivation and focussed attention as their charges. It may not be in the budget, but good teachers are made, not born.

*Philip Kay
New York City*

As a teacher, I found Gladwell's article heartening. For far too long, teacher-credentialling programs have focussed on issues that have nothing to do with imparting knowledge, developing critical-thinking skills in students, running an effective classroom, or preparing students to make the world a better place. Teaching is a delicate balance of subject-matter expertise, patience, firmness, discretion, and a genuine love of young people. Needless to say, these can't be taught in a credentialling program. By bringing a wider cross-section of the population into the teaching profession, then judging whether or not an individual has the innate characteristics of a good teacher, we can insure a better education for our children and a brighter future for our country.

*Gray George
Los Angeles, Calif.*

That "withitness" may be both an essential element in successful teaching and extremely difficult to predict echoes an idea

that some colleagues and I have been exploring, which we refer to as the "presence" of the teacher. At its core, presence could be defined as the ability to listen to everything of relevance that is happening in the room—and to respond flexibly and helpfully. This intense awareness and responsiveness, when combined with deep respect for others, radically alters the traditional student-teacher relationship, from one of control to one of collaboration. Whatever you call these qualities, it is hard to predict who will have them, but observing how people listen—and respond—may be a key to the puzzle.

*Steve Seidel
Cambridge, Mass.*

Gladwell's analogy is flawed in two respects. First, rookie quarterbacks are tested in a unique environment—playing against teams of the fastest, strongest, and most talented professionals—to which college players have no access. Novice teachers, on the other hand, perform in very predictable environments, in which, as part of their training, they might work extensively before becoming full-time educators. Second, most of the qualities of a successful N.F.L. quarterback, such as reaction time, peripheral vision, and height, are inherent and not influenced by coaching. The qualities that Gladwell identifies as critical for the success of teachers, however—attentiveness to individuals in a group and skills in positive reinforcement—are routinely taught in other disciplines, such as social work and counselling. Rather than hire tens of thousands of untrained teachers in the hope of sorting out and retaining a few "naturals," let's try reforming teacher-education programs to develop the specific skills that evidence shows are most important.

*Karen Benker
Brooklyn, N.Y.*

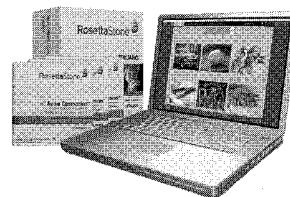
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE CHEKHOVIAN CHILL

The real-life couple Maggie Gyllenhaal and Peter Sarsgaard join Mamie Gummer, Louis Zorich, and Denis O'Hare in a revival of the Chekhov tragedy "Uncle Vanya" at Classic Stage Company, directed by Austin Pendleton. Meanwhile, at BAM, Sam Mendes directs Tom Stoppard's translation of "The Cherry Orchard" in a production that stars Simon Russell Beale, Sinéad Cusack, Rebecca Hall, Josh Hamilton, and Ethan Hawke. (See page 8.)

NIGHT LIFE MR. FANTASY

The British rocker Steve Winwood started out as a teen-ager in the Spencer Davis Group, moved on to the eclectic folk-rock band Traffic, and became a bona-fide pop star in the eighties with a series of slick hits. Winwood comes to the United Palace. (See page 10.)

ART CHIC TO CHIC

In 1923, the pioneering American modernist Edward Steichen accepted a job as chief photographer for *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*—

much to the chagrin of his friend Alfred Stieglitz, who saw the move as an act of treason against fine art. The International Center of Photography presents "Edward Steichen: In High Fashion," which considers the lasting influence of the artist's commercial career. (See page 12.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC HOMECOMING

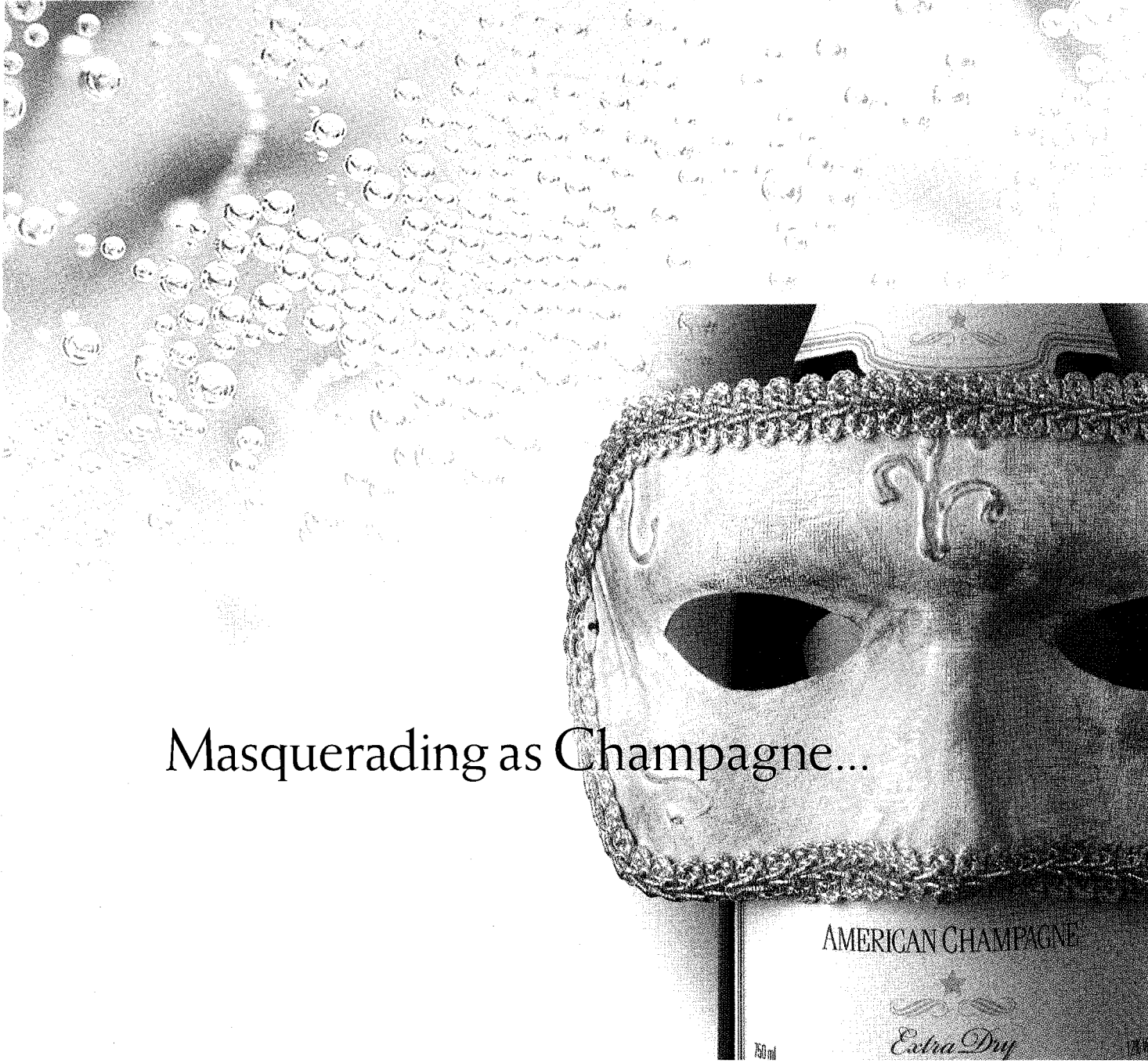
Every winter, Carnegie Hall presents concerts and master classes offered by the Marilyn Horne Foundation, which nurtures the talents of exceptional young singers. This year's series begins with a concert that celebrates

Horne's seventy-fifth birthday. (See page 14.)

MOVIES FOREIGN AFFAIRS

In conjunction with an exhibit devoted to the French writer Irène Némirovsky, the Museum of Jewish Heritage is presenting films relating to the German occupation of France during the Second World War. The series opens with a 1930 adaptation of Némirovsky's novel "David Golder." (See page 17.)

Chris Rob at the Blue Note. Photograph by Yola Monakhov.



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CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK DADDY LONG LEGS

If "Young Mr. Lincoln," John Ford's great film of 1939, has any historical value, it is not as a record of Lincoln—the climactic trial scene bears only the loosest link to his defense of William (Duff) Armstrong, in 1858—but as testimony to an



America that already foresaw its entrance into war. (Note the storm clouds in the final shot.) Ford proves, as ever, that lyricism is no guarantee of subtlety, and there is something Reaganish in the movie's dream of simplicity—"By gee, that's all there is to it," Abe says, musing on a book of law. In the title role, Henry Fonda has a long stride, a nose on loan from Pinocchio, and a winning homeliness of tone, which is used to unforgettable effect in the subduing of a lynch mob. That scene—which fluently follows the Springfield Grand Parade, as if to show how the mood of a crowd can turn on a dime—has a place in cinema history, its appeal to reason and mercy akin to Laurence Olivier's rousing of energy and pride in "Henry V." Ford's film, lovingly shot by Bert Glennon, screens at MOMA on Jan. 18 and Jan. 22.

—Anthony Lane

THE THEATRE OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

THE AMERICAN PLAN

Manhattan Theatre Club presents Richard Greenberg's play, set in the nineteen-sixties, about a young woman who lives across the lake from a Cat-skills resort and falls in love. Mercedes Ruehl and Lily Rabe star; David Grindley ("Journey's End") directs. In previews. (Samuel J. Friedman, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

ARISTOCRATS

Irish Rep presents Brian Friel's drama from 1979, about a wealthy family gathered for the wedding of the youngest daughter. Charlotte Moore directs. Previews begin Jan. 16. (132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737.)

BLANCHE SURVIVES KATRINA IN A FEMA

TRAILER NAMED DESIRE

Todd Parmley directs Mark Sam Rosenthal's satire solo show, which imagines Blanche DuBois as a victim of Hurricane Katrina. Previews begin Jan. 15. (SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 212-691-1555.)

THE CHERRY ORCHARD

The Bridge Project presents Tom Stoppard's new translation of Chekhov's play. Sam Mendes directs; Simon Russell Beale, Sinéad Cusack, Rebecca Hall, Richard Easton, Josh Hamilton, and Ethan Hawke star. Opens Jan. 14. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100.)

EMILIE'S VOLTAIRE

Kevin Confoy directs Arthur Giron's drama, set in the eighteenth century, about the love affair between Voltaire and the mathematician Gabrielle Émilie Le Tonnelier de Breteuil. In previews. (Beckett, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

FRESHWATER

At Women's Project, Anne Bogart directs the only play written by Virginia Woolf, a comedy centered on the photographer Julia Margaret Cameron, her great-aunt. Previews begin Jan. 15. (424 W. 55th St. 212-239-6200.)

HEDDA GABLER

Mary-Louise Parker, Michael Cerveris, Paul Sparks, Peter Stormare, Lois Markle, and Ana Reeder star in a new adaptation by Christopher Shinn of the Ibsen drama, about a woman trapped in an unhappy marriage. Ian Rickson directs the Roundabout Theatre Company production. In previews. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

KRAPP, 39

Michael Laurence wrote and stars in this drama, about an actor obsessed with Samuel Beckett's play "Krappl's Last Tape." George Demas directs. In previews. (SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 212-691-1555.)

LEAVES OF GLASS

Origin Theatre Company and Stiff Upper Lip present the U.S. premiere of Philip Ridley's dark comedy set in East London, about the unstable relationship between two brothers. In previews. Opens Jan. 18. (Peter J. Sharp, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

RIDE

Nick Flint directs the New York premiere of a play by Jane Bodie, an absurdist look at modern sexual politics. Previews begin Jan. 15. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

SIXTY MILES TO SILVER LAKE

At SoHo Rep, Anne Kauffman directs the world premiere of Dan LeFranc's two-character play, which spans seven years, about the relationship between a boy and his father. Previews begin Jan. 15. (46 Walker St. 212-941-8632.)

SOUL OF SHAOLIN

A new Chinese martial-arts show, about an orphan who grows up with the monks of the Shaolin temple and becomes a master in their style of kung fu. In previews. Opens Jan. 15. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

TEN BLOCKS ON THE CAMINO REAL

Target Margin Theatre kicks off its current season with this play by Tennessee Williams, di-

rected by David Herskovits. In previews. Opens Jan. 18. (Ohio, 66 Wooster St. 212-352-3101.)

TERRE HAUTE

George Perrin directs Edmund White's drama, about the bond between a famous writer and an American terrorist, in a transfer from London's West End. In previews. Opens Jan. 18. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

THE THIRD STORY

MCC puts on a new play by Charles Busch, who stars, along with Kathleen Turner, in a farce that combines the fairy-tale, sci-fi, and gangster genres. In previews. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200.)

TWELFTH NIGHT

J. R. Sullivan directs the Shakespeare comedy, at the Pearl. Previews begin Jan. 20. (80 St. Mark's Pl. 212-598-9802.)

23 KNIVES / CAESAR AND CLEOPATRA

Resonance Ensemble presents Christopher Boal's "23 Knives," directed by Eric Parness, in repertory with George Bernard Shaw's "Caesar and Cleopatra," adapted by Eric Overmyer and directed by Kent Paul. In previews. Opens Jan. 18. (Clurman, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

UNCLE VANYA

Maggie Gyllenhaal, Peter Sarsgaard, Mamie Gummer, and Denis O'Hare star in the Chekhov play, directed by Austin Pendleton. Previews begin Jan. 17. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 212-352-3101.)

NOW PLAYING

BECKY SHAW

Gina Gionfriddo's comedy, directed by Peter DuBois, deals largely in shrink speak ("You force people to hurt you"), and, like a therapy session, it wavers between juiciness and tediousness. A high-strung married couple, Suzanna (Emily Bergl) and Andrew (Thomas Sadoski), set up Suzanna's cold-blooded adopted brother, Max (David Wilson Barnes), on a blind date with Becky (Annie Parisse), a needy wallflower (or is she a manipulator?) from Andrew's office. The date goes badly—very badly—with complications for everyone. Gionfriddo's characters often come across as self-dramatizing, rather than as players in an artful dramatic scheme. But the play succeeds in blurring the audience's allegiances: which of these neurotic souls, it cunningly asks, is capable of real empathy? (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

THE BLUE BIRD

Witness Relocation performs a play by Mikuni Yonahara, translated by Aya Ogawa and Kameron Steele, about a group of scientists in search of an endangered species. (CSV, 107 Suffolk St. 212-868-4444.)

THE CONNECTION

Judith Malina directs Jack Gelber's play from 1959, in which junkies and jazz musicians are filmed as they wait to buy drugs. (Living Theatre, 19 Clinton St. 212-352-3101.)

THE CRIPPLE OF INISHMAAN

The Atlantic Theatre Company partners with Galway's Druid Theatre to import this invigorating revival, directed by Garry Hynes, of Martin McDonagh's bleak comedy about a disfigured young man with Hollywood dreams. In 1934, the filmmaker Robert J. Flaherty set up shop on an island off the coast of Ireland to make what would eventually become "Man from Aran," a pseudo-documentary about the local peasants. McDonagh sets his own pseudo-anthropological eye on the next island over, among a gossip-addled community of drunks, bullies, and tattletales, who are thrown into a mild frenzy over the disappearance of Cripple Billy, the town orphan and emotional punching bag (beautifully acted by Aaron Monaghan), who sees Flaherty's film as his one chance to escape. The ensemble deftly navigates McDonagh's rough terrain of alternating darkness and humor, painting a sharp portrait of a world where cruelty is inseparable from love. (336 W. 20th St. 212-279-4200.)

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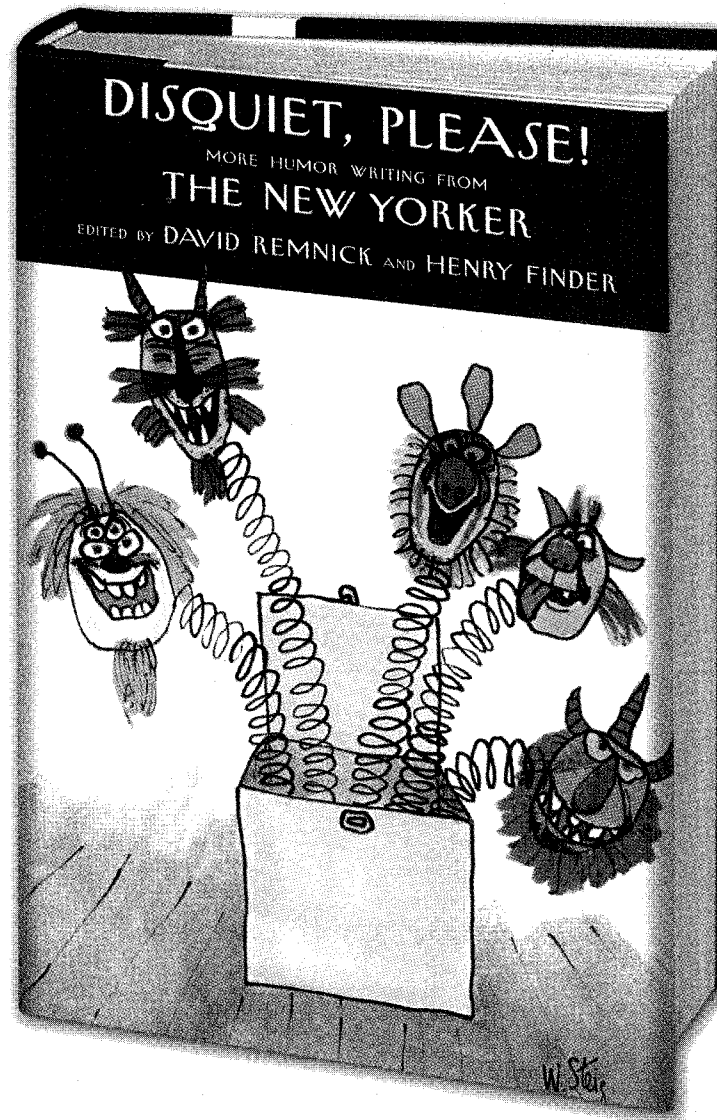
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Towns," by Nick Brooke and Jenny Rohn, "Don Cristobal, Billy-Club Man," by Erin Orr and Rima Fond, and "Sonnambula," by Michael Bodel. (145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 212-352-3101.)

EIGHT

Ella Hickson wrote and directs this play, which premiered at Edinburgh Fringe, examining the psyche of England's twenty-something generation. (P.S. 122, First Ave. at 9th St. 212-352-3101.)

THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS

Company XIV presents a revival of its dance-theatre cabaret based on Greek mythology. Austen McCormick directs. (Duo Theatre, 62 E. 4th St. 212-868-4444.)

PAL JOEY

At Studio 54, this Rodgers and Hart musical from 1940, well directed by Joe Mantello, has a shrewd, streamlined new book by Richard Greenberg, in an exciting production for the Roundabout Theatre Company. Joey (Matthew Risch) picks up the jejune Linda (Jenny Feller) at a diner; meanwhile, for the price of his company, the rich Mrs. Vera Simpson (Stockard Channing) bankrolls Joey's dream: his own night club. Channing makes Simpson's hauteur and her hunger sensational, while Martha Plimpton, as Gladys Bumps, has a big, surprising brassy voice and an attitude to match. Risch, who started out as the understudy, is good-looking, strong-voiced, and hardworking, but he doesn't have the twinkle that Joey must have to explain why such a ruthless meathead is catnip to women. Although parts of this soufflé are delicious, it never completely rises. (Reviewed in our issue of 1/5/09.) (254 W. 54th St. 212-719-1300.)

THE SHIPMENT

Young Jean Lee wrote and directs this play, about what it means to be black in America. (Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793, ext. 11.)

UNDER THE RADAR

The Public presents its annual festival of the latest cutting-edge theatre from around the world. (425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555. Through Jan. 18.)

WICKETS

Jenny Rogers and Clove Galilee's adaptation of Maria Irene Fornes's "Fefu and Her Friends" moves the action from a house in 1935 to an airplane in 1971. The theatre has been transformed into an airplane cabin, and Fefu (Lee Eddy) and company are lipstick-stained stewardesses who serve nuts and drinks to the audience (seated passenger style) while they discuss marriage, gunplay, genitals, and whether the repulsive can also be compelling. The actors are bright and energetic, the heels high, and the skirts short; Rogers and Galilee have added dialogue from a porn movie, text from Valerie Solanas's "SCUM Manifesto," and song-and-dance numbers set to "Cecilia" and "White Rabbit." What's meant to reexamine second-wave feminism ends up coming close to camp—or to a colorful party where the guests forget about the host. (3LD Art & Technology Center, 80 Greenwich St. 212-352-3101.)

Also Playing

AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY: Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **AVENUE Q:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **BILLY ELIOT THE MUSICAL:** Imperial, 240 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **CHICAGO:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **EQUUS:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **THE FANTASTICKS:** Snapple Theatre Center, 1627 Broadway, at 50th St. 212-307-4100. **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY GOES TO REHAB:** 47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200. **GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 212-307-4100. **IN THE HEIGHTS:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-239-6200. **JERSEY BOYS:** August Wilson, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200. **THE LION KING:** Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4747. **THE LITTLE MERMAID:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 212-307-4747. **MAMMA MIA!:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-239-6200. **MARY POPPINS:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4747. **SHREK THE MUSICAL:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200. **SLEEPWALK WITH ME:** Bleecker Street Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. 212-239-6200. **SOUTH PACIFIC:** Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-

6200. **SPEED-THE-PLOW:** Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200. **SPRING AWAKENING:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. Through Jan. 18. **THE 39 STEPS:** Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **WICKED:** Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.

NIGHT LIFE

ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BARBÉS

376 9th St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-965-9177)—Jan. 17: **Kill Henry Sugar.** This New York duo's latest record is "Swing Back and Down," a collection of original songs inspired by the political and social history of their city and state. The subject matter comes to life thanks to rhythms and melodies that manage to sound both archival and brand new. Erik Della Penna creates expressive textures on guitar, banjo, and Dobro, and Dean Sharenow is a mightily musical drummer.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL

237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Jan. 17: New Jersey's **Smithereens** are a sturdy bar band that penetrated the college-rock scene in the mid-eighties with a British Invasion-inspired sound. Their days of pop-chart success are long behind them, and the band has become something of a Beatles-cover act. Two years ago they released "Meet the Smithereens," an homage to the Fab Four, and last year they put out "B-Sides the Beatles," more covers of songs by the lads from Liverpool.

BOVERY BALLROOM

6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Jan. 15: The throbbing sounds of disco and electro-punk get a fresh coat of glitter in the music of **Heloise & the Savoir Faire.** This up-and-coming act from Brooklyn has signed to Simian Records, the actor Elijah Wood's label. The band's debut release, "Trash, Rats, and Microphones," features a contribution from Debbie Harry.

HIGHLINE BALLROOM

431 W. 16th St. (212-414-5994)—Jan. 16: Si*Se is a downtown electronica collective led by the enchanting vocalist Carol C. The outfit mixes Latin rhythms and an urban sensibility into a potent cocktail.

IRIDIUM

1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Jan. 16-18: The great Texan guitarist **Jimmie Vaughan** may be long gone from the band, but the **Fabulous Thunderbirds** rock on, the steady presence of their front man, Kim Wilson, on vocals and harmonica insuring the requisite blues power. If you saw the recent film "Cadillac Records," you caught Wilson's playing; he performed all the harmonica parts in the movie. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JOE'S PUB

425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Jan. 17: Life in a Blender is a long-running Brooklyn institution specializing in quirkily heartfelt pop that is both surreal and thought-provoking. Lately, the endearingly absurdist musings of the lead singer, Don Rauf, have come augmented with lush arrangements. Rife with oddness, the band's work hides moments of poignancy and introspection amid the laughs. With the Brooklyn ensemble **Les Sans Culottes**, whose raunchy faux-French rock is both a sendup of and a tribute to late-period Serge Gainsbourg and punchy yé-yé girl pop.

MERCURY LOUNGE

217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—Jan. 17: **Girls Girls Girls**, an all-female Mötley Crüe cover band (the name comes from the Crüe's fourth album), have tight leather pants, big hair, and pumped-up aggression, just like their heavy-metal heroes. Coming from a similar black hole in the culture is **Pinkallica**, an all-female tribute to the testosterone-fueled Metallica.

MUSIC HALL OF WILLIAMSBURG

66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-486-5400)—Jan. 17: **The Fluid** is a veteran grunge

band from Colorado who signed to the preëminent indie label of the genre, Sub Pop, during the height of the flannel-swaddled movement, some twenty years ago. They never made it as big as their peers in Nirvana, Soundgarden, and Mudhoney, but the band was a respected contributor to the scene and the sound.

UNITED PALACE

4140 Broadway, at 175th St. (800-745-3000)—Jan. 16: **Steve Winwood**, who has a robust voice that's comparable to Ray Charles', rose from humble roots in the English Midlands to the top of the classic-rock pantheon. He first found fame singing for a succession of sterling ensembles like the Spencer Davis Group, Traffic, and Blind Faith, before launching a solo career that took a sharply commercial turn in the eighties. His most recent album, the aptly titled "Nine Lives," found Winwood largely abandoning the radio-ready sound of the Reagan era in favor of a grittier approach.

WEBSTER HALL

125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—Jan. 16: The Danish duo **the Raveonettes** first surfaced in 2002, with noisier rock full of echoey reverb and fuzzy guitar abrasion à la the Jesus & Mary Chain. They deviated from this formula for the album "Pretty in Black," from 2005, but their latest release, "Lust Lust Lust," finds the pair diving back into the sonic murk that first brought them notice.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL

59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Through Jan. 31: The vocalist **Steve Ross** performs "Too Late Now," "Gigi," "I'm Glad I'm Not Young Anymore," "Almost Like Being in Love," and other songs by the lyricist Alan Jay Lerner.

BIRDLAND

315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Jan. 14-17: The **Pat Martino Organ Quartet.** Some forty years after honing his trade in the popular organ-based bands of the day, the venerated guitarist Martino returns to the traditional format.

BLUE NOTE

131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Jan. 13-18: The trombonist **Delfeayo Marsalis** salutes his onetime employer, the late drum innovator Elvin Jones.

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA

Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Jan. 13-18: No-frills hard bop from the West Coast-based **Clayton Brothers Quintet**, which features the commanding trumpet playing of **Terrell Stafford.** Jan. 19: The pianist **Cyrus Chestnut** celebrates Martin Luther King Day.

FEINSTEIN'S AT LOEWS REGENCY

540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-339-4095)—Jan. 13-17: The death last year of his wife, Cyd Charisse, has apparently not slackened the spirit of the ninety-seven-year-old vocalist **Tony Martin.**

HIGHLINE BALLROOM

431 W. 16th St. (212-414-5994)—Jan. 20-21: The **Joshua Redman Double Trio.** Redman will be the only horn player on stage, but the saxophonist won't be lonely; he'll be joined by two rhythm teams including the drummers **Brian Blade** and **Gregory Hutchinson** and the bassists **Larry Grenadier** and **Reuben Rogers**, each a former member of Redman's ensembles.

JAZZ STANDARD

116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Jan. 14: Two major contemporary poets, **Charles Simic** and **Robert Pinsky**, will be accompanied in their readings by the pianist **Vijay Iyer**, the bassist **Lonnie Plaxico**, and the drummer **Andrew Cyrille**—a trio worthy of its own headlining night of music. Jan. 15-18: Like his fellow guitar titan Pat Martino (see Birdland), **John Abercrombie** garnered attention working with sixties organ players (in Abercrombie's case, the keyboardist **Johnny Hammond**). Over the ensuing decades, Abercrombie has occasionally employed organ in his recordings, usually with intriguing results. Here the instrument is manned by **Gary Versace**; the saxophone virtuoso **Jerry Bergonzi** pitches in as well.

Jan. 20: The Coleman Family Legacy Band unites the masterful tenor saxophonist George Coleman, his wife, Gloria, on organ and vocals, and his son George Jr. on drums. The Mingus tribute bands are in rotation on Mondays.

THE STONE

Avenue C at 2nd St. (No phone)—Jan. 15-16: Though better known for his work with the funkified trio Happy Apple, the saxophonist Michael Lewis unleashes his modern-jazz energy with another trio, *Fat Kid Wednesdays*, which has been a Minneapolis mainstay for more than a decade but is only now making its New York debut. Lewis's dry tone recalls Ornette Coleman's, but his exhilarating blend of self-revealing intensity and melodic logic is entirely his own; his bandmates, the bassist Adam Linz and the drummer JT Bates, swing with him in a songbook that ranges from compositions by Thelonious Monk and Charles Mingus to show tunes and intricate originals. (For more information, visit www.thestonenyc.com.)

VILLAGE VANGUARD

178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Jan. 13-18: With the addition of the saxophonist Tony Malaby and the trumpeter Ralph Alessi, the pianist Fred Hersch transforms his marvelous trio into a formidable quintet; the same unit that recorded the sterling album *"Fred Hersch Trio + 2,"* in 2004. The *Vanguard Jazz Orchestra* holds sway on Mondays.

ART MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—*"Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C."* Through March 15. ♦ *"The Philippe de Montebello Years: Curators Celebrate Three Decades of Acquisitions."* Through Feb. 1. ♦ *"Art and Love in Renaissance Italy."* Through Feb. 16. ♦ *"Raqqib Shaw."* Through March 1. ♦ *"Calder Jewelry."* Alexander Calder was just eight years old when he made his first piece of jewelry, in 1906, for his sister's doll, from wire he found in the street. He continued to favor low materials (brass, steel, beach glass) for adornments, though he did work in silver and gold, as evidenced by the tribal-inflected cuff bracelets; pig-, butterfly-, and morning-glory-shaped brooches; and gargantuan necklaces on display. The show exposes visitors to more than Calder's wit and artistry—one glimpses his social circle, as well. Much of the jewelry here was created as gift for such patrons and friends as Peggy Guggenheim, Joan Miró's daughter, and the wife of Luis Buñuel. Through March 1. ♦ *"Reality Check."* Through March 22. ♦ *"Choirs of Angels: Painting in Italian Choir Books, 1300-1500."* Through April 12. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—*"Marlene Dumas: Measuring Your Own Grave."* Through Feb. 16. ♦ *"Pipilotti Rist: Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)."* Through Feb. 2. ♦ *"Vik Muniz: Rebus."* Through Feb. 23. ♦ *"Focus: Sol LeWitt."* Through June 29. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—*"The Thannhauser Collection."* Ongoing. ♦ *"Kandinsky and Expressionist Painting before World War I."* Ongoing. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 7:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3600)—*"William Eggleston: Democratic Camera, Photographs and Video, 1961-2008."* Through Jan. 25. ♦ *"Alexander Calder: The Paris Years, 1926-1933."* Through Feb. 15. ♦ *"Alex Bag."* Through April 30. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM

200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—*"The Black List Project: Timothy Greenfield-Sanders*

and *Elvis Mitchell."* Through March 29. ♦ *"Burning Down the House: Building a Feminist Art Collection."* Through April 5. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and weekends, 11 to 6.)

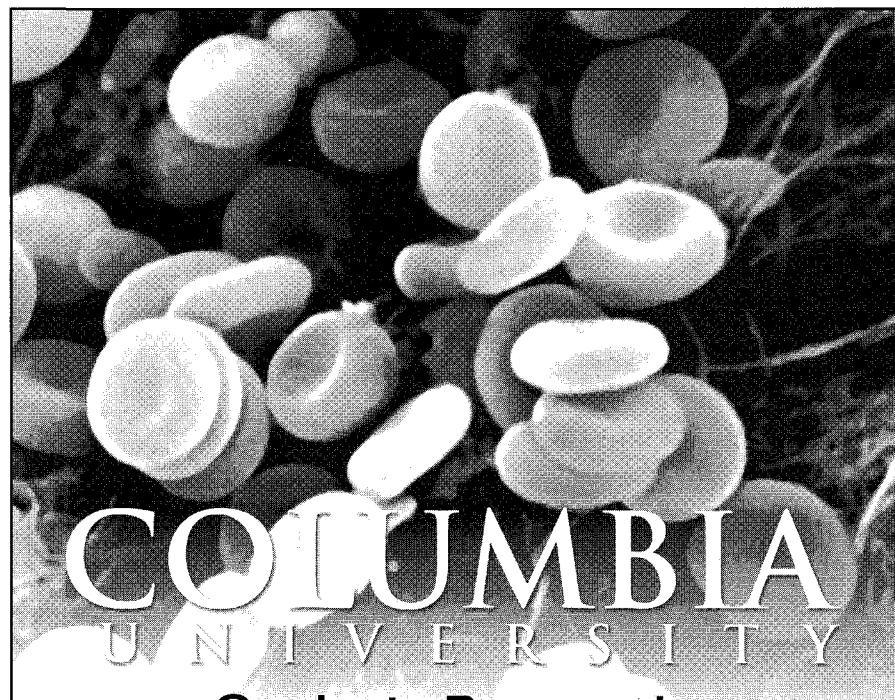
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—*"Climate Change: The Threat to Life and a New Energy Future."* Through Aug. 16. ♦ *"The Butterfly Conservatory: Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter."* Through May 25. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM AT LINCOLN SQUARE

2 Lincoln Square (212-595-9533)—It might be too soon, even in bear-market terms, to start piecing scrap quilts. But inspiration awaits in the masterworks of *"Recycling and Resourcefulness: Quilts of the 1930s."* Flour and feed sacks, worn work clothes, and dressmaking leftovers construct geometric Grandmother's Flower Garden, Chinese Fan, and Postage Stamp patterns. Even more eye-catching are the crazy quilts, including a

denim-heavy "britchy" quilt sewn by Catherine Somerville of Aliceville, Alabama, and a severe coverlet of black woollen suiting fabrics stitched with running lines of feathery white, signed and dated "Ella 1922." Through March 15. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 7:30, and Sundays noon to 6.)

DIA AT THE HISPANIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA
Audubon Terrace, Broadway at 155th St. (212-926-2234)—*"Zoe Leonard: Derrotero."* Photographs of shops on the Lower East Side, in both color and black-and-white (shades of Arget and Evans) are laid out in grids on the walls, tracking the flow of second-hand goods between the U.S. and countries like Poland, Uganda, and Mexico. The second part of the show presents rare maps and navigational charts of unknown territories, drawn from the Hispanic Society's collection. What results is a conceptual epic spanning five centuries of globalization. Through April 8. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 4:30, and Sundays, 1 to 4.)



Graduate Program in Narrative Medicine

The care of the sick unfolds in stories. The effective practice of healthcare requires the narrative competence to recognize, absorb, interpret, and act on the stories and experiences of others. Medicine practiced with narrative competence is a model for humane and effective healthcare.

Columbia's new **M.S. in Narrative Medicine** seeks to fortify clinical practice and training with narrative skills in order to strengthen the overarching goals of medicine, public health, and social justice, as well as the intimate, interpersonal experiences of the clinical encounter. The program aims to educate a leadership corps of health professionals and those with backgrounds in the humanities and social sciences. The degree can be completed in one year of full-time study or over two or more years of part-time study.

INFORMATION SESSION

Tuesday, February 10, 6:30 P.M.

R.S.V.P. online.

 COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
School of Continuing Education

www.ce.columbia.edu/nm3



Joan Jonas in Robert Ashley's opera "Celestial Excursions" (see Classical Music).

THE DRAWING CENTER

35 Wooster St. (212-219-2166)—"Matt Mullican: A Drawing Translates the Way of Thinking." In the eighties, Mullican's works looked like street signs, though the concepts were far more complicated: abstract and metaphysical, their subjects ranged from divinity and fate to death. A few of these colorful, iconographic posters are on display, along with cosmological diagrams, maps, collages, and rubbings. Mullican's oeuvre is less about physical objects than it is about art as an instrument of the unconscious. No surprise, then, that the artist underwent hypnosis to produce some of the drawings and videos here. Through Feb. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 6, and Saturdays 11 to 6.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY

1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (212-857-0000)—"Edward Steichen: In High Fashion." Opens Jan. 16. ♦ "Weird Beauty: Fashion Photography Now." Opens Jan. 16. ♦ "This Is Not a Fashion Photograph." Opens Jan. 16. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Fifth Ave. at 103rd St. (212-534-1672)—"Eudora Welty in New York: Photographs of the Early 1930s" is both more and less than its title suggests. The exhibition includes eleven photographs made by the then aspiring author in Manhattan, along with a bigger and much more interesting series she took in Mississippi and first exhibited in New York in 1936 (the same year her first short story was published). The New York pictures record the city in the midst of the Depression, but there's very little originality in Welty's views of men standing idle. She's considerably more confident and casual in Mississippi, where nearly all her photographs depict African-American subjects seen in passing: shoppers strolling, couples bantering, two boys in overalls toting blocks of ice. The apparent sincerity of Welty's work doesn't entirely make up for its lack of depth, but the handsome vintage prints

help place it in a much more forgiving historical context. Through Feb. 16. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

NEW MUSEUM

235 Bowery, at Prince St. (212-219-1222)—"Mary Heilmann: To Be Someone." Through Jan. 26. (Open Wednesdays and weekends, noon to 6, and Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 10.)

SCULPTURECENTER

44-19 Purves St., Long Island City (718-361-1750)—"The Space of the Work and the Place of the Object." Through March 22. ♦ "In Practice." Through March 22. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM

144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—"Barkley L. Hendricks: Birth of the Cool." Through March 15. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

VICTOR SCHRAGER

Schrager's still-life photographs begin with ordinary objects (books, bottles, light bulbs, glycerine soap), then dissolve into dreamy geometric abstractions. Floating in a space full of mist and reflections, blocks and bars of luscious, translucent color suggest Hans Hoffman on a spa vacation. But no matter how blissed-out and gorgeous, Schrager's arrangements never feel random or merely decorative. His jellybean colors may make your mouth water, but seduction and sophistication, hot and cool, are in perfect balance. Through Jan. 24. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-750-7070.)

LOUIS STETTNER

Stettner, who recently turned eighty-six, is primarily known for atmospheric, closely observed photographs of New York in the nineteen-fifties. His views of Paris, where he spent a good part of his career, are similarly moody. The works

gathered here range across decades, from 1949 to 2001, but because Stettner's focus is Paris at its most charming and familiar, they collectively evoke one timeless, idyllic moment. Atget and Kertész echo through the earliest images of cafés, store façades, and tree-lined streets, most of which are presented as small black-and-white contact prints. Next to them, a few large-scale pictures look aggressive and out of place. Through Jan. 31. (Benrubi, 41 E. 57th St. 212-888-6007.)

Short List

PETER DOIG: Werner, 4 E. 77th St. 212-988-1623. Opens Jan. 17. **EVA LUNDSÄGER:** Greenberg Van Doren, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-445-0444. Through Feb. 7. **AD REINHARDT / TONY SMITH:** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 212-421-3292. Through Jan. 24. **FRED SANDBACK:** Zwirner & Wirth, 32 E. 69th St. 212-517-8677. Through Feb. 28. **LAWRENCE WEINER:** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 212-581-5187. Opens Jan. 15.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

WILLIAM ANASTASI

Early in his career, Anastasi was best known as an heir to Duchamp: a cunning Conceptualist who ranged across disciplines. He made sculptures and sound works and was also an artistic adviser to the choreographer Merce Cunningham. Here, in work made between the early sixties and 2000, he looks like a gonzo formalist. An assemblage of cardboard hung rakishly on the wall presages the work of Richard Tuttle. Canvases with exuberant graphite, acrylic, or oil-stick markings attest to the vitality of painting—though they were made in an era when the medium was declared extinct. The best works combine Anastasi's formal chops with his literary wit, as seen in a canvas bearing the phrase "self-pity," which a steel frame threatens to engulf. Through Jan. 17. (Blum, 526 W. 29th St. 212-244-6055.)

EMNA ZGHAL

Zghal's oil paintings, watercolors, and etchings borrow patterns from nature—the rings in trees and nubbles in bark, the dapple of sun through leaves, water stirred by wind. Her palette is almost rainbow-bright, and the piquant color organizes the small, all-over abstractions into networks of nervous lines that flirt with—but don't quite coalesce into—figures. The suggestion of organic materials and bodies intensifies Zghal's unabashed lyricism, and viewers are asked to check their suspicions about beauty at the door. Through Jan. 17. (M.Y. Art Prospects, 547 W. 27th St. 212-268-7132.)

Short List

RICHARD ALDRICH: Bortolami, 510 W. 25th St. 212-727-2050. Through Feb. 14. **NOBUYOSHI ARAKI:** Kern, 532 W. 20th St. 212-367-9663. Through Feb. 7. **JANET BIGGS:** Oliver, 513 W. 26th St. 212-929-5949. Through Feb. 7. **CHARLES LONG:** Bonakdar, 521 W. 21st St. 212-414-4144. Opens Jan. 15. **FAIRFIELD PORTER / ANDREW FORGE:** Cunningham, 541 W. 25th St. 212-242-2772. Through Jan. 31. **SARA GREENBERGER RAFFERTY:** The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. Through March 7. **PETER ROSTOVSKY:** Meltzer, 525-531 W. 26th St. 212-727-9330. Through Feb. 14. **FRED SANDBACK:** Zwirner, 525-533 W. 19th St. 212-727-2070. Through Feb. 14. **AMY SILLMAN:** Sikkema Jenkins & Co., 530 W. 22nd St. 212-929-2262. Opens Jan. 17. **"EVERY REVOLUTION IS A ROLL OF THE DICE":** Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 212-255-1105. Through Feb. 7.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

KATE GILMORE

Gilmore's roots are in the endurance-based art of the sixties, but her videos are gleefully absurd—more Bruce Nauman's "Walking in an Exagger-

ated Manner" than Chris Burden's "Shoot." In one early work, she was on the receiving end of a torrent of tossed tomatoes. This time out she's dressed to the nines and armed with a sledgehammer, as she rips her way through walls painted to coordinate with her outfit, and uses her stilettos as tools. In another piece, she teeters atop a shaky pedestal that's being demolished by two men beneath her. It's noisy good fun, but the satire of gender stereotypes is far from subtle. Through Jan. 18. (Smith-Stewart, 53 Stanton St. 212-477-2821.)

EUGENE RICHARDS

A dedicated, prolific photojournalist with a muckraker's instincts, Richards is drawn not to battlefields but to drug dens, emergency rooms, and other places where people's lives spin out of control. His latest work is a nightmarish group of pictures made over the past few years in psychiatric institutions in Mexico, Paraguay, and Kosovo—holding pens for patients who receive little care and less attention. Alongside classic snake-pit images—surreal and horrific, of milling groups of men and women, some naked, others slumped on the floor—there are pictures of people caged and restrained that are hard to look at and impossible to forget. Through Jan. 18. (401 Projects, 401 West St. 212-633-6202.)

"NAMELESS SCIENCE"

Doctoral programs are proliferating in art schools, and Apex Art presents seven PhD projects that marry academic research with sculpture, video, and installation. Unfortunately, this makes for a lackluster show. Matts Leiderstam, from the Malmo School of Art, offers a slide show of eighteenth-century landscape prints, next to a laptop on which viewers can navigate a fifty-seven-page essay about technological intervention and the picturesque. Ricardo Basbaum, of the Universidade de Estado de Rio de Janeiro, presents video of groups artfully interacting with a boat-shaped construction—using it as a drum and a goldfish pond, among other things. They appear to be having fun—more, in fact, than the visitors to the show, who may feel as if they were looking through the wrong end of the conceptual telescope. Through Jan. 31. (291 Church St. 212-431-5270.)

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET

This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the City Ballet's School of American Ballet, and the milestone will be celebrated this week with a one-night tribute (Jan. 14). Guest artists, all alumni of the school—Paloma Herrera, from American Ballet Theatre; Damian Smith, from San Francisco Ballet; Amy Watson, from the Royal Danish; and others—will return to perform three beloved works from the Balanchine repertoire, "Serenade" (from 1935), "Tartarella," and "The Four Temperaments." Not to be missed is the "Four Voices" program, later in the week, which includes the playfully post-Soviet "Concerto DSCH," by Alexei Ratmansky, one of the company's best new works. Balanchine's take on the charming doll ballet "Coppélia" will have its final performance on Saturday. ♦ Jan. 14 at 7:30 (tribute to the School of American Ballet); "Serenade," "Tartarella," "The Four Temperaments," and "Vienna Waltzes." ♦ Jan. 15 at 8 and Jan. 20 at 7:30: "Interplay," "The Cage," "Four Bagatelles," and "I'm Old Fashioned." ♦ Jan. 16-17 at 8: "Coppélia." ♦ Jan. 17 at 2 and Jan. 18 at 3: "Chiaroscuro," "Papillons," "Concerto DSCH," and "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet." (David H. Koch, Lincoln Center. 212-721-6500. Through March 1.)

PARSONS DANCE COMPANY

If David Parsons and his dancers don't please you, it won't be for lack of trying. Two alternating programs include repertory pieces such as the signature strobe-light workout "Caught" and the season premiere of "Remember Me," which features the East Village Opera Company, playing and singing famous arias in pop-rock arrangements—doing to the classical repertory something similar

to what Parsons does to dance. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Jan. 13-14 at 7:30, Jan. 15-16 at 8, Jan. 17 at 2 and 8, and Jan. 18 at 2 and 7:30.)

GALLIM DANCE

Before starting her own company, in 2006, the Utah-born Andrea Miller danced with Ohad Naharin, the influential director of Ensemble Batsheva, in Tel Aviv. It shows in her work, which exhibits Naharin's playfully gangly moves and eclectic musical tastes, as well as some of his artfully deadpan style. This week, the company presents Miller's new "Blush"—in which the dancers perform covered in white paint from head to toe, with bright-pink fingertips. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 212-352-3101. Jan. 13 and Jan. 16-17 at 8 and Jan. 18 at 3.)

DD DORVILLE / HUMAN FUTURE DANCE CORPS

In "Choreography, a Prologue for the Apocalypse of Understanding, Get Ready!," the phenomenologically minded choreographer addresses language and understanding—as in: what does it mean when an audience member says, "I don't understand." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Jan. 14-17 at 7:30.)

CEDAR LAKE CONTEMPORARY BALLET

During its winter season, this well-funded company offers a triple bill, including two stylish world premieres, "Frame of View," by the Dutch choreographer Didi Veldman, and Luca Vegetti's characteristically spare, sleek, and abstract piece "Memory/Measure." (547 W. 26th St. 212-868-4444. Jan. 14-18 at 8.)

JEANINE DURNING

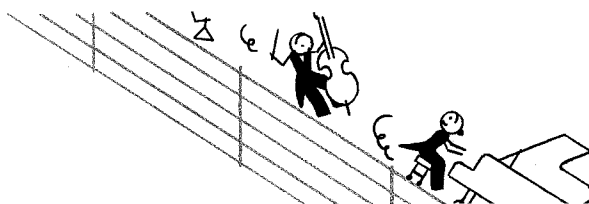
The mental feats of dancers are often as impressive as the physical ones: how do they remember it all? In "Ex-Memory: waywewere," what Durning calls a "performance experiment," she examines those powers of recall by allowing some slack. To a deliberately greater extent than normal, each performance is a loose reconstruction of a previous one, altered and sifted by recollection. Video footage, both live and prerecorded, further complicates matters, while Jules Maxwell provides the score from his laptop and a metronome ticks away. (St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 866-811-4111. Jan. 15-17 at 8:30.)

"DANCE ON CAMERA"

The final two days of the festival at the Walter Reade offer a preview of "Something to Dance About," an excellent new "American Masters" documentary (to be aired on PBS next month) about Jerome Robbins, directed by Judy Kinberg and written by Amanda Vaill, as well as the Indian melodrama "Ishanou" ("The Chosen One"), which culminates in a riveting shamanic dance. For a complete schedule, visit www.filmlinc.com. (Lincoln Center. 212-727-0764. Jan. 16-17.)

"TANGO, HISTORIAS BREVES"

The tone of this show by the Argentinean choreographer Guillermina Quiroga, returning to the Skirball Center in a slightly updated version, is better captured in its former title, "Tangos of the Cabala." The tango isn't a dance and music form here so much as a mysterious force of destiny. Religious symbols appear; dancers wear



CLASSICAL NOTES IN CHAMBERS

The events of last year took place on a grand scale. Yet some of the most satisfying classical disks of the past few months offer performances of the most intimate kind.

Keeril Makan is an arrestingly gifted young American composer, as he proves on his new album, "In Sound" (Tzadik). In two works performed by the Kronos Quartet, Makan moves blocks of jagged sound around with the pitiless determination of a brutalist architect ("The Noise Between Thoughts") and crafts the most humble chords and scraps of melody into a lulling whole ("Washed by Fire"). If accessibility is what you crave, then turn to the mandolin phenom and emerging composer Chris Thile. In his first album with his string band Punch Brothers, "Punch" (Nonesuch), he mixes his bluegrass sounds with Baroque bass lines, atonal textures, and bits of late-Romantic harmony to make "The Blind Leaving the Blind," a four-movement reinvention of the string quintet.

The voice of the late Lorraine Hunt Lieberman, in its tragic grandeur, somehow made the hard facts of life more bearable; a 1999 recital at Wigmore Hall (Wigmore Hall Live) with the pianist Julius Drake shows the mezzo-soprano giving unexpected depths to Schumann's "Frauenliebe und -leben" and a forthright tone to Brahms's strikingly erotic Eight Songs, Op. 57. In contrast, the sylph-like sounds of the soprano Susan Narucki, ably accompanied by Donald Berman in "The Light That Is Felt" (New World Records), give a touching equanimity to a group of Charles Ives songs that includes such temperamental opposites

as "Songs My Mother Taught Me" and "Like a Sick Eagle."

Ives's young friend Elliott Carter, now entering his second century, is still a bright light of American music. In "Oppens Plays Carter" (Cedille), the pianist Ursula Oppens gathers nearly all of Carter's solo piano music—from his Piano Sonata (1945-46) to "Matribute" (2007)—onto one disk, delivering it with a mix of grit and grace. The pianist Pedja Muzijevic accomplishes an equally impressive feat in "Sonatas & Other Interludes" (Albany), an odd but compelling album that alternates short works for prepared piano by John Cage with compositions by Liszt, Schumann, and W. F. Bach.

Joseph Haydn, who invented modern chamber music, infused his middle-period chamber symphonies with an impassioned experimentalism that can still sound jarring today. The Munich Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Alexander Liebreich, gives the Symphonies No. 39 and No. 45 ("Farewell") plenty of drive and glamour in a recording (on ECM) that also offers a fascinating chamber symphony by the late Berlin-based Korean composer Isang Yun. Franz Schreker, in his luxuriant way, paid tribute to Haydn in his own magnificent Chamber Symphony, heard in a near-definitive recording (ECM) by Peter Eötvös and the Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra, complemented by Heinrich Schiff's interpretation of Friedrich Cerha's Concerto for Cello and Orchestra.

—Russell Platt

masks. Still, the dancing delivered by the highly polished cast—Quiroga and her flashy partner, Cesar Coelho, plus three other couples—is rich and inventive, accompanied by a tight tango orchestra led by the bandoneon player Cacho Acuna. (566 LaGuardia Pl. 212-545-7536. Jan. 16-17 at 8.)

KELLEY DONOVAN & DANCERS

Last year, New York performances of "It's All Forgotten Now" revealed Donovan, a Boston- and New York-based choreographer, as a distinctive mover and a dancemaker unusual in her ability to build a piece organically. Her company, committed if underdeveloped, returns with "Borrowed Bones," a new work on letting go—a favorite theme that is almost built in to her spiralling style. (Merce Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St. 781-420-3893. Jan. 16 at 9 and Jan. 17 at 8.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA

During the Met's annual hiatus in mid-January, the only offering is Mark Morris's enchanting 2007 production of Gluck's "Orfeo ed Euridice," a spare, compact, and firmly lyrical work from the early Classical era that came as a correction after several decades of florid, Handel-like entertainments. Morris's choreography, executed by members of the Mark Morris Dance Group, is interspersed with performances by a trio of wonderful singers: Danielle de Niese, Heidi Grant Murphy, and Stephanie Blythe; James Levine conducts. (Jan. 14 and Jan. 20 at 8 and Jan. 17 at 1.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA:

"ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA"

With the departure of Gerard Mortier from the directorship of the company, its only major production of the season—two concert performances of Samuel Barber's resplendent opera, based on the Shakespeare play—assumes a make-or-break importance. Lauren Flanigan and Teddy Tahu Rhodes (in his City Opera debut), inhabiting parts originally composed for Leontyne Price and Justino Diaz, should be charismatic leads; George Manahan conducts the New York City Opera Orchestra and Chorus. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Jan. 15-16 at 8.)

THREE OPERAS BY ROBERT ASHLEY

For four decades, Ashley has stood as the quiet radical of American opera, creating evocative works in which a team of trusted singer-reciters intone the extraordinary words of ordinary people—senior citizens, homeless guys—as Ashley weaves a garland of electroacoustic sound around them. Three of them run in repertory this week and next. Jan. 15-16 at 8: "Dust." ♦ Jan. 17-18 at 8: "Celestial Excursions." ♦ Jan. 20-21 at 8: "Made Out of Concrete." (La Mama, E.T.C. Annex, 74A E. 4th St. 212-475-7710. For more information, see www.lamama.org.)

BRONX OPERA: "TWO WIDOWS"

The hardy outer-borough company gives audiences a very rare opportunity to hear a gem of a comic opera by Bedrich Smetana (better known for "The Bartered Bride"), the father of Czech music. Michael Spierman conducts two Manhattan performances at the Kaye Playhouse. (Hunter College, Lexington Ave. at 68th St. 212-772-4448. Jan. 17 at 8 and Jan. 18 at 2.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

Two of the world's most compelling musicians, the young conductor Gustavo Dudamel and the violinist Pinchas Zukerman, dominate the week at the Philharmonic. The music they offer—Mahler's Fifth Symphony and the recent Violin Concerto of Oliver Knussen—should be a more than adequate platform for their talents. (Jan. 15 and Jan. 20 at 7:30 and Jan. 16 at 11 A.M.) ♦ Dudamel

also conducts the Mahler in an intermissionless "rush hour" concert before the main run of performances. (Jan. 14 at 6:45.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.)

RECITALS

VIVICA GENAUX AND MEMBERS OF THE VENICE BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

The Alaskan mezzo-soprano sets her dusky tone and brilliant coloratura against the rough glamour of Andrea Marcon's renowned ensemble (in miniature form) in an evening at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall that features concertos and operatic arias by Vivaldi, Hasse, and Handel (excerpts from "Giulio Cesare" and "Ariodante"). (212-247-7800. Jan. 14 at 7:30.)

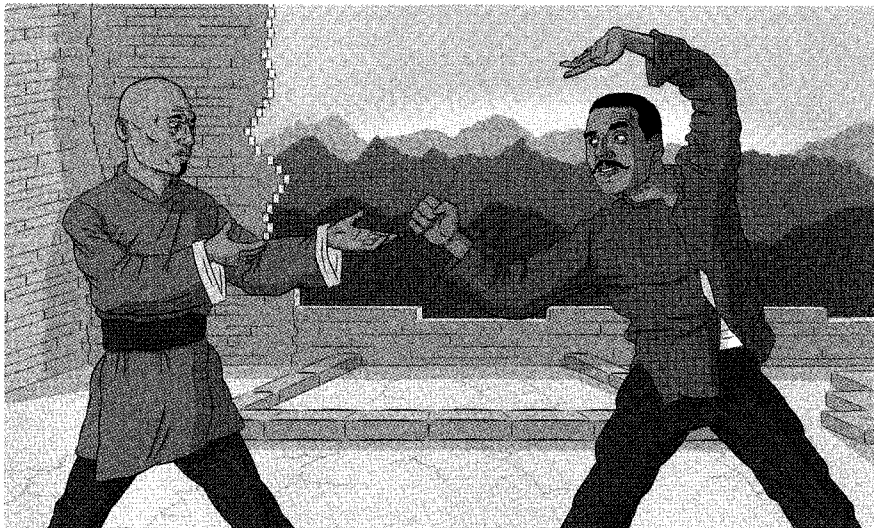
tus, Op. 90), and Schumann ("Carnaval") in a recital at the Metropolitan Museum. (Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 212-570-3949. Jan. 16 at 8.)

VASSILY PRIMAKOV

Another compelling Russian pianist, this one at the beginning of his career, takes the stage at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall to perform works by Tchaikovsky (the rarely programmed Grand Sonata and excerpts from "The Seasons"), Brahms, and Schumann (another "Carnaval"). (212-247-7800. Jan. 17 at 2.)

AMERICAN STRING QUARTET

These distinguished veterans of the quartet scene play with unflagging energy and insight. Their program at Merkin Recital Hall features quartets by Haydn, Beethoven (Op. 130 in B-Flat Major, including the "Grosse Fuge"), and Tobias Picker (a premiere). (129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Jan. 17 at 8.)



"Chandni Chowk to China," a Bollywood kung-fu comedy, opens Jan. 16.

NEW YORK FESTIVAL OF SONG

In its annual collaboration with the Juilliard School, Gotham's roving concert series offers "Latin Lovers," a feast of music by such composers as Guastavino, Ginastera, Piazzolla, and Villa-Lobos. Steven Blier, along with two colleagues on percussion and guitar, accompanies a group of talented young singers. (Peter Jay Sharp Theatre, Juilliard School. Jan. 14 at 8. For information about tickets, call 212-769-7406.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

A depth-of-winter concert at the intimate Rose Studio promises a dose of summery warmth in the form of Beethoven's Clarinet Trio, Op. 11; Barber's "Summer Music," for wind quintet; and Poulenc's Sextet for Piano and Winds. The artists include the pianist André-Michel Schub, the flutist Carol Wincenc, and the clarinetist Anthony McGill. (Rose Building, Lincoln Center. 212-875-5788. Jan. 15 at 6:30 and 9:30.)

DA CAPO CHAMBER PLAYERS

Music by last year's birthday boys, Messiaen and Carter, continues to fill the schedule. This concert by the long-admired group features Carter's "Tempo e Tempi" and "Four Songs of Louis Zukofsky" (both featuring the soprano Lucy Shelton), along with Messiaen's towering "Quartet for the End of Time." (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Jan. 15 at 8.)

MEEHAN/PERKINS DUO

Two superb young players from the group So Percussion perform works (some of them premieres) by Paul Lansky, Michael Gordon, John Fitz Rogers, and David Lang ("Table of Contents"), the winner of the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for Music. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Jan. 16 at 8.)

VLADIMIR FELTSMAN

The enduring Russian pianist, a probing musician, offers music by Haydn, Schubert (the Four Impromptus,

BERNARDA FINK

Songs by Schubert (including such favorites as "An Silvia" and "Ganymed") and Dvořák (the "Gypsy Songs" and "Biblical Songs") grace the elegant Argentinean mezzo-soprano's program at Town Hall, accompanied by Anthony Spiri. (143 W. 43rd St. 212-586-4680. Jan. 18 at 2.)

MARILYN HORNE FOUNDATION CONCERTS

Jan. 18 at 2: The great mezzo-soprano's foundation exists to benefit promising young singers, but this year's events begin with a diamond-birthday concert that offers performances by such stars as Karita Mattila, Joyce DiDonato, Susan Graham, David Daniels, and Thomas Quasthoff; the estimable Warren Jones and Brian Zeger (among others) are at the piano. (Stern Auditorium.) ♦ Jan. 20 at 5:30: Ken Noda is the accompanist for a young artists' recital that includes songs by Beethoven, Mahler, Griffes, Verdi, and Richard Hundley. (Weill Recital Hall.) (212-247-7800.)

VENICE BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

The lustrous ensemble from La Serenissima (also concertizing with Vivica Genaux this week) offers an orchestral program at the Morgan Library & Museum featuring concertos for strings by Vivaldi (including the Concerto for Four Violins in B Minor), Geminiani, and Albinoni. (225 Madison Ave. 212-590-0309. Jan. 18 at 5.)

MUSIC AT THE FRICK COLLECTION:

MA'ALOT QUINTET

An acclaimed wind quintet from Germany comes to the Frick's patrician confines to lend style to cornerstone works by Mendelssohn (an arrangement of the "Midsummer Night's Dream" music), Hindemith, Ligeti (the Bagatelles), and Piazzolla. (1 E. 70th St. 212-547-0715. Jan. 18 at 5.)

JUPITER SYMPHONY CHAMBER PLAYERS

Alessio Bax, a young pianist of exceptional promise, and the New York Philharmonic's principal violist, Cynthia Phelps, are among the notable

musicians joining the ensemble in a program featuring Mozart's lovely Duo No. 2 for Violin and Viola as well as piano quintets by Vaughan Williams and Frank Bridge. (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. 212-799-1259. Jan. 19 at 2 and 7:30.)

MOVIES OPENING

BALLERINA

A documentary portrait of five dancers from the Mariinsky Theatre, directed by Bertrand Normand. In Russian and English. Opening Jan. 16. (Quad Cinema.)

CHANDNI CHOWK TO CHINA

A Bollywood kung-fu comedy, directed by Nikhil Advani and starring Akshay Kumar. In Hindi, Cantonese, and Mandarin. Opening Jan. 16. (ImaginAsian and Village Theatre VII.)

HOTEL FOR DOGS

Thor Freudenthal directed this comedy, about children who take care of stray dogs in an empty hotel. Starring Emma Roberts and Jake T. Austin. Opening Jan. 16. (In wide release.)

NOTORIOUS

A bio-pic about the rapper the Notorious B.I.G., directed by George Tillman, Jr., starring Jamal Woolard; co-starring Angela Bassett, Derek Luke, and Anthony Mackie. Opening Jan. 16. (In wide release.)

PAUL BLART: MALL COP

Kevin James co-wrote and stars in this comedy, about a security guard who thwarts a major robbery. Directed by Steve Carr. Opening Jan. 16. (In wide release.)

THE PERVERT'S GUIDE TO CINEMA

The philosopher Slavoj Žižek discusses movies in this documentary, directed by Sophie Fiennes. Opening Jan. 16. (IFC Center.)

characters' inner lives, and its roof beams loom menacingly above their heads like gallows). Mean-spirited, craven, and selfish behavior dominates throughout, as in the novel of the same title, by Irène Némirovsky, on which the film is based. The director, Julien Duvivier, offers some inspired images, bold lighting effects, and an audacious disjunction of picture and sound. He also finds every possible angle from which to emphasize hook noses and frizzy hair along with bald pates, double chins, and fat behinds; the film's most telling detail concerns a fabulously wealthy Old World Jew, Soifer (Paul Franceschi), who walks on tiptoe so as not to wear out the heels of his shoes. In French.—*Richard Brody* (Museum of Jewish Heritage; Jan. 18.)

DEFIANCE

In the fall of 1941, in Nazi-occupied Belarus (just east of Poland), where Jews were being executed by the thousands, four brothers from a large farming family named Bielski went into the forest along with a few other people determined to survive. Eventually, twelve hundred Jews seeped out of the ghettos and joined the Bielski Otriad (Detachment). Some threw in their lot with Soviet partisans; the rest miraculously improvised a civil society in the woods, complete with hospital, bathhouse, and tannery. The director Edward Zwick and the screenwriter Clayton Frohman, working with material from Nechama Tec's 1993 historical study of the same title, has shaped a stirring narrative. Though the action—shot by Eduardo Serra very near to the actual sites—is, at times, too theatrically staged, Zwick generally keeps it blunt and terse. Daniel Craig, speaking in a dry, shiv-like voice, is the smart, dominating leader, Tuvia Bielski, and he plays this Moses figure without losing his sex appeal. Liev Schreiber, surly and tough, is his quarrelsome younger brother, and there is an enormous cast of minor actors and extras, some of them memorable. James Newton Howard wrote the thunderous and lachrymose score—the weakest element in the movie.—*D.D.* (Reviewed in our issue of 1/12/09.) (In wide release.)

FROST/NIXON

In its transfer from stage to film, Peter Morgan's account of David Frost's lengthy set of interviews with Richard Nixon, in 1977, three years after he resigned the Presidency, has taken on an aura of momentousness unwarranted by the event itself. Frank Langella's performance provides considerable insights into Nixon's intelligence, caginess, and fraudulent sentimentality, and Michael Sheen makes Frost into a toothy, bright, shallow but smart showman-journalist. The interviews themselves, always absorbing, build to Nixon's climactic admission that he let the country down during the Watergate crisis. The media whirl of negotiation, advisers, preparation, and so on is engaging enough, but the episode itself changed nothing. It was a journalistic coup, not a historical milestone, and the filmmakers don't seem to realize that. Directed by Ron Howard.—*D.D.* (12/8/08) (In wide release.)

GRAN TORINO

Clint Eastwood appears as, in effect, the last white man in America, guarding what might be called the last American car—a green 1972 Ford Gran Torino, lovingly preserved in his garage in run-down Highland Park, just outside Detroit. Eastwood, who also directed, stars as Walt Kowalski, a racist old man who lives next door to a family of Asian immigrants. At first, Walt (a vision of what Dirty Harry might have become) is their antagonist, but he then becomes their protector, as he helps them fight off the neighborhood gangs. The movie ends with a surprising act of renunciation. Although it's a minor work, the film is fascinating if you're interested in Eastwood's reflections on the characters he's played and his role in American iconography. With Bee Vang as the kid who becomes Walt's surrogate son. Written by Nick Schenk.—*D.D.* (12/22 & 29/08) (In wide release.)

THE LONG DAY CLOSES

In this exquisite, impressionistic, quasi-autobiographical reverie, from 1993, the British director Terence

NOW PLAYING

CHE

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (IFC Center.)

THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON

A child is born in New Orleans in 1918 with the features and internal organs of an old man; then, as time passes, his age declines until he goes through late middle age, middle age, youth, and so on, back toward infancy and death. This science-fiction reverse-aging conceit, from an early F. Scott Fitzgerald story, has been rendered by the writer Eric Roth and the director David Fincher with a fanatical literalness that occasionally touches on the uncanny but often feels laborious and even pedantic. As Benjamin becomes younger, he turns into the handsome, fortyish Brad Pitt, and he has an affair with a vibrant, normally aging dancer (Cate Blanchett). They meet in the middle, so to speak, but the relationship is odd, since, instead of the fervent memories of youth, Benjamin has only the relief that he is no longer a crotchety old man. He's bland; he's Brad Pitt. There is much else, about New Orleans, the sea, and many other things, but the movie is an attenuated folly. With Tilda Swinton. The amber-hued cinematography is by Claudio Miranda.—*David Denby* (In wide release.)

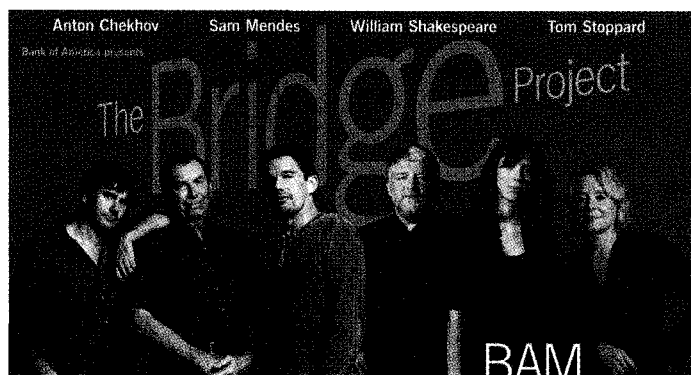
DAVID GOLDER

The all too common link of anti-plutocratic populism and anti-Semitism is on fulsome display in this grotesque, overheated, and fascinating French melodrama, from 1930. Harry Baur delivers a mighty performance in the title role, as a Jewish immigrant who made a fortune through brilliance and bluster and seizes the chance to crush a former partner as revenge for past wrongs. Felled by heart trouble, he withdraws to his villa in Biarritz, where his frivolous daughter, Joyce (Jackie Monnier), and his concupiscent, adulterous wife, Gloria (Paule Andral), cavort in casinos and pump him mercilessly for money with no regard for his health. (In a brilliant bit of set design, the master bedroom is as bare and grim as the

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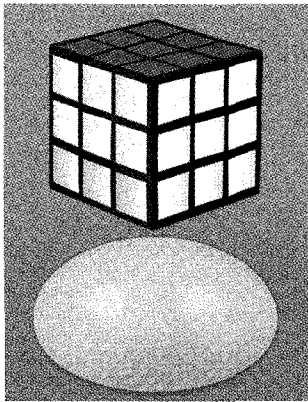
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CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK ONLY CONNECT

Vik Muniz, the irreverent Brazilian known for playing fast and loose with food and art history—he's remade Leonardo's "Last Supper" in chocolate syrup and Caravaggio's "Medusa" in spaghetti—has organized



an all-synapses-firing show, titled "Rebus," at MOMA. Eighty-two objects from the collection, both choice (a beachscape by the French Symbolist Odilon Redon) and mundane (a plastic hamburger, designer unknown), are arranged single file, sparking a domino effect of optical associations. Some are formal: a yellow square by Ellsworth Kelly abuts Kiki Smith's glass sculpture of an egg yolk. Others crack wise: stones, both collected and copied in bronze, by Vija Celmins, shears made by the cutlery company J. A. Henckels, and a crumpled ball of paper by Martin Creed play a round of rock, scissors, paper. The best are metaphysical: when a Giacometti bronze meets a plain brown bag (two objects that embody volume and flatness, presence and void), Muniz suggests that seeing is more than believing, because art is a place beyond belief.

—Andrea K. Scott

Davies celebrates, with meticulous grace, a Liverpool boyhood in 1955-56. The tender, introverted eleven-year-old protagonist, Bud Davies (Leigh McCormack), is nurtured in a milieu of working-class gentility by his widowed mother and his three elder siblings (two brothers and a sister). Bud's imagination is haunted by movies and music (and the soundtrack features a flood of clips ranging from Debbie Reynolds and the Platters to "The Magnificent Ambersons" and Mahler's Tenth), as well as by his family's Catholicism. His favorite position is seated and musing, whether on a staircase or at a window, with a perpetual half smile on his lips as he savors the view and his own refined sensations. A nocturnal family stroll through a carnival takes on the air of a solemn religious procession, and a breathtaking set of overhead tracking shots through a church and a movie theatre suggests the essential unity of Bud's passions—and their equally strong exaltation of daily life. Davies resurrects footfalls and shadows, the pattern and texture of carpets, the sound of his mother's singing voice—the sort of undramatic things that are lodged in memory for a lifetime.—R.B. (MOMA; Jan. 16-17.)

MADE IN U.S.A.

In 1966, Jean-Luc Godard threw together, in mere weeks, this hectic, self-flagellating political fantasy, based loosely on a novel by Donald Westlake as well as on the widely reported kidnapping of the Moroccan left-wing activist Mehdi Ben Barka. The slapdash spontaneity of the production helped Godard unleash a host of frenzies—political, cinematic, and personal. He cast his ex-wife, Anna Karina, as a journalist in search of her former lover, a political activist who, like Ben Barka, disappeared (and whose tape-recorded voice is Godard's own). The patchy plot of cartoonish Cold War skulduggery involves a couple of secret agents with the Hollywood monickers of Siegel and Widmark (played by the French New Wave icons Jean-Pierre Léaud and László Szabó), a novelist named after the noir writer David Goodis (Yves Afonso, a Jean-Paul Belmondo look-alike), and two young *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics playing Richard Nixon and Robert McNamara. With a color scheme of agitprop Mondrian, a background of blankly suffocating spaces, a barroom lesson in semiology featuring the young Marianne Faithfull's a-cappella rendition of "As Tears Go By," and a deluge of political rhetoric, Godard evokes a chaotic new world of deadly abstractions, artistic impasses, and insoluble conflicts. His luminous, longing closeups of Karina show who really was desperately seeking whom. In French.—R.B. (Film Forum; Jan. 14-22.)

MEMORIES OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT

This audacious, sensual portrait of an alienated intellectual in Castro's Cuba, circa 1961, is one of the great movies of its era. The director, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, puts the audience inside the head of a would-be writer (Sergio Corrieri, in a marvelous performance) who comes to understand just how conflicted he is about everything—class and sex included. There's a ruthless, universal brand of comedy in his more fatuous deeds and utterances: he views the Revolution as his personal revenge against the stupidity of the Cuban bourgeoisie. But the movie is also full of tough-minded mystery. The classic sequence of the writer taking a girl to the Hemingway Museum is rich with ironies about the interplay of art, celebrity, and social conscience. Alea adapted the novel "Inconsolable Memories," by Edmundo Desnoes. In Spanish. Released in 1968.—Michael Sragow (IFC Center; Jan. 16-19.)

MILK

Gus Van Sant's vibrantly entertaining bio-pic recreates, without starchiness, the San Francisco life of the gay activist and politician Harvey Milk (Sean Penn), who was assassinated in 1978, along with Mayor George Moscone, by a fellow-politician, the family-values conservative Dan White (Josh Brolin). The righteous march of events is warmed by the banter, the casual sex, and the candor of the gay milieu in the giddy seventies, the period just before AIDS, when life was free and easy. Much of the time, Penn keeps his voice down, but the fervor and humor are there in the most offhanded moments. Without ostentation, he creates a new body, a new temperament: he loosens his neck and shoulders and swivels his head; his smile is enormous and all-embracing; he holds an elbow out and pumps a fore-

arm up and down like a semaphore as Harvey speaks in public. Brolin, a slab of hair lying low across his forehead, gives White a brick-headed, baffled manner, a tormented neediness. In the filmmakers' interpretation, there's a suggestion that White suffered from murderously repressed homosexuality. With James Franco, Emile Hirsch, Diego Luna, and Alison Pill.—D.D. (12/1/08) (In limited release.)

REVOLUTIONARY ROAD

Commuters in identical gray suits and hats pour like lava through Grand Central Terminal and settle in to work in vast open floors with shaded glass partitions. Cigarettes are lit and furiously smoked; Martinis, consumed by the bucketful, launch anxious bouts of adultery and heartrending quarrels. We're in the fifties, the alleged graveyard of American hope, and Frank (Leonardo DiCaprio) and April Wheeler (Kate Winslet) are a suburban couple who have the freedom to do nothing but tear each other apart. It turns out that there's a gap between the Wheelers' soaring spiritual ambitions and their actual talents and interests. Their dilemma is grounds for pathos, or possibly for satire, but is it grounds for tragedy? The story, sour and relentless, works toward a gruesomely unhappy ending. Winslet plays April as a will-driven hysteric; DiCaprio gets the externals right, but he's a little afraid of revealing the depths of Frank's shallowness. Watching the two go at each other may be cathartic for some, but it shouldn't be confused with movie art. Sam Mendes directed; Justin Haythe adapted Richard Yates's celebrated 1961 novel.—D.D. (12/22 & 29/08) (In wide release.)

THE SECRET OF THE GRAIN

In the French port of Sète, near Montpellier, on the Mediterranean coast, a large family of Tunisian immigrants and their French-born children gather together to eat and quarrel in a heated atmosphere of rivalry and sexual jealousy. The family patriarch (Habib Boufahes), a laid-off dockworker desperate to leave something for his children and grandchildren, attempts to impress the local French nabobs with a couscous restaurant that he opens on an old ship. The director, Abdellatif Kechiche, works with a handheld camera that messily captures the abundant family life; he digs a story out of the flux, and, in the last forty minutes or so, the suspense is terrific. With the beautiful Hafsa Herz, whose heroic dancing not only saves the restaurant from opening-night disaster but is guaranteed to alter the erotic tastes of Westerners who have made a fetish out of a flat, lean belly. In French, Arabic, and Russian.—D.D. (1/12/09) (IFC Center.)

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE

An eighteen-year-old Muslim tea-boy named Jamal (Dev Patel), born and raised in the poverty of Mumbai, teeters on the verge of fame and fortune. A nation awaits. Such is the old-fashioned, sentimental cliffhanger to which the screenwriter Simon Beaufoy and the director Danny Boyle have, with unembarrassed drive, committed themselves. Jamal is a contestant on the Indian edition of "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?," and the suspicion of the police—who, in an ill-judged prelude to the story, hold and torture him—is that he must have cheated. His response is that experience alone, whether wretched or comic, has by chance furnished him with the correct answers, and the bulk of the film, constructed from flashbacks, proves his point. The style, seen previously in "City of God" and other movies, is what you might call urban-maniac: heated performances, even hotter colors, and camerawork that vies with the editing for nerve and speed. The lad at the center of it all is actually on the dull side, but the energy around him—not least in the dance sequence over the final credits—is difficult to resist.—Anthony Lane (11/24/08) (In wide release.)

VALKYRIE

The new Bryan Singer film marks his reunion with the screenwriter Christopher McQuarrie, with whom he worked on "The Usual Suspects." No suspect is more usual than Adolf Hitler, but this is the first time that Hollywood has taken on the assassination plot that was mounted against him in 1944. Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg (Tom Cruise), newly mutilated in the North African campaign, returns to Berlin and finds common cause with other disenchanting Nazis. Granted personal access to the Führer (David Bamber), he succeeds in planting a bomb, but it fails to

eliminate the target; instead, it is the plotters who die. The mechanics of the attempt itself are staged with brio and cunning, each minor hindrance acquiring a tint of black comedy; but the first hour of the film, in which the plan is hatched and bickered over, feels sown with confusion. What finally sinks the film, however, is the treatment of the supporting characters, who seem not only thin in conception (Singer, McQuarrie, and the co-writer Nathan Alexander elided the list of real conspirators, yet there are still too many taken on board here) but also dangerously overplayed. Normally reliable performers like Bill Nighy and Tom Wilkinson look ill at ease in their uniforms, which may be a point in their moral favor but augurs badly for the confidence of the movie. Also with Kenneth Branagh and, as the least plausible German general in the history of warfare, Eddie Izzard.—A.L. (1/5/09) (In wide release.)

WALTZ WITH BASHIR

A documentary cartoon may sound like an oxymoron (is it not the duty of animation to elasticate reality?), and Ari Folman's film is indeed impossible to classify. Buried within it is the massacre at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps of West Beirut, in 1982, but much of the movie is composed of dreams and distant recollections, as Folman—who was serving in the Israel Defense Forces at the time—questions his former colleagues and slowly feels his way toward the horror. There are passages of unexpected lyricism, including the Fellini-like vision of a giant waterborne nude, as well as a very funny pastiche of no-budget German pornography, but the harsh editing and the gloomy hues leave you in no doubt as to the somber purpose of Folman's quest. Whether that justifies the last-minute switch of direction, in which he reverts to actual news footage of the slaughter, is open to debate; the head-on vigor of his animation is already graphic enough. In Hebrew, German, and English.—A.L. (1/5/09) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

A WOMAN OF PARIS

The title of Charlie Chaplin's 1923 drama, in which he does not appear, is something of a misnomer. Though the story does concern a young French woman whom fate casts adrift in the capital, its underlying theme of the corrupting influence of sumptuous decadence and frivolous pleasure places it squarely in the gleefully expansive Hollywood of the first-generation moguls, where Chaplin was king. The innocent Marie St. Clair (Edna Purviance), detached by a misunderstanding from her artist fiancé Jean Millet (Carl Miller) in her native village, turns up in Paris a year later as the mistress of Pierre Revel (Adolphe Menjou), the richest roué in town. Though she lives and entertains in style, a chance reunion with Jean—in a stunning moment of recognition foreshadowing the romantic climax of Chaplin's 1931 "City Lights"—puts her future in doubt. Chaplin's manner is deft and witty, but the depiction of unchecked wealth and the moral rot it breeds (as seen in the carefree stripping of one reveller by another at exactly the kind of riotous house party that Chaplin must have known by the dozen) links this drawing-room romance to the fierce political comedies in which he stars. *Silent*.—R.B. (MOMA; Jan. 14-16.)

THE WRESTLER

A straightforward tale, given tremendous extra punch by its leading man. Mickey Rourke, whose career was long ago laid to rest, rises again to play Randy (the Ram) Robinson, a wrestler whose own career has tumbled from a high of twenty years before. No one else, it seems fair to say, could have played the part; for one thing, no one but Rourke combines a gently spoken sweetness with so glazed and inflated a physique, together with a willingness to be treated by his peers like a veal chop. The scenes in the ring, in which Randy, despite a heart attack, struggles to prolong the dregs of his appeal, are often hard to take; but even more agonizing are his attempts to forge enduring bonds with his estranged daughter (Evan Rachel Wood) and a tired stripper (Marisa Tomei). The film has a grainy, bloodied sadness that slips at times into the sentimental; but the director, Darren Aronofsky, knows precisely where the heart of the story beats, and that confidence is a refreshing change after the drippy meanderings of his previous film, "The Fountain." There is nothing less mystical, or

more moving, than to watch the Ram reduced to serving at a deli counter: a good man at the end of the line.—A.L. (12/15/08) (In wide release.)

Also Playing

BRIDE WARS: In wide release. **JUST ANOTHER LOVE STORY:** Cinema Village. **MARLEY AND ME:** In wide release. **SILENT LIGHT:** Film Forum. **THE SPIRIT:** In wide release.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES

32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—"New-Filmmakers Presents." Jan. 14 at 6: "Horns and Halos" (2002, Michael Galinsky and Suki Haw-

TABLES FOR TWO FLEX MUSSELS

174 E. 82nd St. (212-717-7772)—On the shell-fish-as-grub scale, the mussel is neither as distinguished as the lobster nor as misunderstood as the sea urchin. It is loved by the Old World and neglected by the New—a Belgian's *moules et frites* is an American's burger and fries, and our chefs began to pay heed only after clams became scarce. Late last year, the restaurateur Bobby Shapiro debuted, on the Upper East Side, a version of a sea-weathered mussel shack that charmed his family while they were vacationing on the South Shore of Prince Edward Island. The name, though reminiscent of a Tarzan boast, is apt: Flex Mussels forgoes European and American tradition and puts the mussel on steroids. Amid oil paintings of life on P.E.I., little metal sand pails as bread baskets and light fixtures, and, curiously, a dozen security cameras, Shapiro offers pounds of P.E.I. mussels steamed twenty-three different ways—a tour of the world's herbs and spices.

"What country do you feel like visiting?" a server asked the other night. Nearly all stops are postcard-worthy, but some are more adventurous than others: the Dubliner combines Guinness, toasted walnuts, and caramelized onions; the Bombay employs curry, mango, and garlic; and the Spaniard uses chorizo, olives, tomato sauce, and red wine. In an impromptu voyage to Asia, the Peking (duck, ginger, rice wine) nar-

FILM FORUM

W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—In revival. Jan. 14-22 at 1, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, and 10:10: "Made in U.S.A." (†). The *New Yorker* writer Richard Brody will introduce the 8:20 screening on Jan. 16.

FRENCH INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—"Cinéma Tuesdays." Jan. 20 at 12:30, 4, and 7:30: "Love Story" ("Douce") (1943, Claude Autant-Lara; in French).

IFC CENTER

323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—Through April 5: "After the Revolution: Cuba on Screen." Jan. 16-19 at 11 A.M.: "Memories of Underdevelopment" (†). ♦ "Waverly Midnight." Jan. 16-18: "Eraserhead" (1978, David Lynch). ♦ "Stranger Than Fiction," a documentary series. Jan. 20 at 8: "The Education of Shelby Knox" (2005, Marion Lipschutz and Rose Rosenblatt), introduced by the directors and the subject, a sex-education activist.



rowly surpassed the Thai (curry-coconut broth, lemongrass, coriander). Kiddie forks help you pluck mussel from shell, but you quickly learn that the bang is in the broth, and it's best to roll up your sleeves and apply the scoop-and-slurp. (There are some half dozen non-mussel items—lobster roll, seafood stew, steak frites—all in distinctly secondary roles.)

The main attraction at Flex Mussels, though, is a P.E.I. native named John Bil, whom Shapiro brought down to help him open up shop. Bil, who mixes drinks and commands the dining room with both a surfer's insouciance and a ship-builder's precision, is a three-time oyster-shucking champion—"You know how you've got dog walkers here?" he asked recently. "Well, we've got oyster shuckers up there"—and he and his beach buddies like to steam a batch of mussels, freeze them in seawater, and, when drunk, thaw them and eat them like popcorn. Over a couple of bottles of Sauvignon Blanc in a room that smells more like the Atlantic Ocean than Coney Island does, Bil teaches you to eat them that way, too. He resolves moments of confusion without pretense or condescendence. Is a cooked but still closed mussel okay to eat? "Open it. If it looks wrong, don't eat it." It didn't, and he did. (Open daily for dinner. Entrées \$16-\$32.)

—Mike Peed

ley). ♦ Jan. 14 at 7:30: "Crawford" (2008, David Modigliani) and "Black November" (2008, Nate Jones). ♦ Jan. 14 at 9:15: "Interrogate This" (2008, Maryanne Galvin), followed by a panel discussion with psychologists about interrogation methods. ♦ In première. Jan. 14-20 at 7 and 9:15: "Mock Up on Mu" (2008, Craig Baldwin). ♦ The films of Teuvo Tulio. All films are in Finnish. Jan. 15 at 6:45, Jan. 17 at 2:45, and Jan. 18 at 8:30: "The Song of the Scarlet Flower" (1938). ♦ Jan. 15 at 9, Jan. 17 at 5, and Jan. 18 at 6: "In the Fields of Dreams" (1940). ♦ Jan. 16-17 at 7:15 and Jan. 18 at 4: "The Way You Wanted Me" (1944). ♦ Jan. 16-17 at 9:30 and Jan. 18 at 2: "Cross of Love" (1946). ♦ Films featuring Marjorie Cameron. Jan. 17 at 5: "Night Tide" (1963, Curtis Harrington). ♦ Jan. 18 at 5: "The Wormwood Star" (1956, Harrington), "Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome" (1954, Kenneth Anger), and short films by Wallace Berman.

MUSEUM OF JEWISH HERITAGE

36 Battery Place. (646-437-4202)—Through Jan. 25: "Hiding in Plain Sight: Pre- and Post-War French Cinema." Jan. 18 at 1: "David Golder" (†), followed by a Q. & A. with the literary historian Maurice Samuels. ♦ Jan. 18 at 3:30: "Forbidden Games" (1952, René Clément), followed by a Q. & A. with the film historian Dudley Andrew.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—"Still Moving." Jan. 14-16 at 1:30: "A Woman of Paris" (†). ♦ "Global Lens 2009." Jan. 14 at 7, Jan. 15 at 8:30, Jan. 16-17 and Jan. 19 at 6, and Jan. 18 at 8: "Sleepwalking Land" (2007, Teresa Prata; in Portuguese). ♦ Jan. 15 at 6: "Getting Home" (2007, Zhang Yang; in Mandarin). ♦ Jan. 16 at 8: "Song from the Southern Seas" (2008, Marat Sarulu; in Russian). ♦ Jan. 17 at 4: "Mutum" (2007, Sandra Kogut; in Portuguese), introduced by the director. ♦ Jan. 18

at 4: "Possible Lives" (2007, Sandra Gugliotta; in Spanish). ♦ Jan. 19 at 4: "What a Wonderful World" (2006, Faouzi Bensaidi; in French and Arabic). ♦ Films by Terence Davies. Jan. 15 at 6 and Jan. 17 at 2: "Children" (1976), "Madonna and Child" (1980), and "Death and Transfiguration" (1983). ♦ Jan. 15 at 8:15: "Of Time and the City" (2008). ♦ Jan. 16 at 5 and Jan. 17 at 7:30: "The Long Day Closes" (†). ♦ Jan. 16 at 7 and Jan. 17 at 4:30: "The House of Mirth" (2000). ♦ Through Jan. 31: "American Politics: From the Archives." Jan. 18 at 2: "Abraham Lincoln" (1930, D. W. Griffith). ♦ Jan. 18 at 4 and Jan. 22 at 6: "Young Mr. Lincoln" (1939, John Ford). ♦ Jan. 19 at 2:30: "King: A Filmed Record... Montgomery to Memphis" (1970, Sidney Lumet and Joseph Mankiewicz). ♦ Jan. 19 at 6: "Primary" (1960, Robert Drew).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5610)—Through Jan. 29: The New York Jewish Film Festival. Jan. 14 at 1:30 and 6:15: "At Home in Utopia" (2008, Michal Goldman) and "Yosl Cutler and His Puppets" (1935, Joseph Burstyn). ♦ Jan. 14 at 3:30 and Jan. 15 at 1 and 6: "Emotional Arithmetic" (2007, Paolo Barzman). ♦ Jan. 14 and Jan. 18 at 8:30 and Jan. 17 at 6:30: "Two Lives Plus One" (2007, Idit Cebula; in French). ♦ Jan. 15 at 3:15 and 8:15: "Facing the Wind" (2006, Gilad Reshef; in Hebrew) and "My Father's Palestinian Slave" (2007, Uri Appenzeller and Nathanel Goldman Amirav; in Hebrew and Swedish). ♦ Jan. 17 at 9: "Weekend in Galilee" (2007, Moshe Mizrahi; in Hebrew). ♦ Jan. 18 at 1: "Jewish Luck" (1925, Alexander Granofsky; silent). ♦ Jan. 18 at 3:30 and Jan. 19 at 6: "Max Minsky and Me" (2007, Anna Justice; in German). ♦ Jan. 18 at 6: "Our Disappeared" (2008, Juan Mandelbaum; in Span-

ish). ♦ Jan. 19 at 1: "The Jester" (1937, Joseph Green and Jan Nowina-Przybylski; in Yiddish). ♦ Jan. 19 at 3:20: "Forgotten Transports: To Estonia" (2008, Lukáš Pribyl; in Czech, English, and German). ♦ Jan. 19 at 8:30: "A Refusenik's Mother" (2008, Ori Ben Dov; in Hebrew) and "Yideshe Mama" (2008, Fima Shlick and Gennady Kuchuk; in Hebrew and Russian). ♦ Jan. 20 at 1:30 and 6: "Empty Nest" (2008, Daniel Burman; in Spanish). ♦ Jan. 20 at 3:45: "A Road to Mecca: The Journey of Muhammad Asad" (2008, Georg Misch).

READINGS AND TALKS

"THALIA BOOK CLUB"

The journalist Amy Goodman talks with Louise Erdrich about Erdrich's latest collection, "The Red Convertible: Selected and New Stories." The actor Sonia Manzano will read from the book. (Thalia Theatre, Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Jan. 14 at 7:30.)

LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM

Since 2003, Storycorps has been interviewing and archiving the tales of ordinary Americans. On Jan. 15 at 6:30, Dave Isay, the founder of the organization, offers selections from "Listening Is an Act of Love," a collection of compelling personal anecdotes from across the country. (108 Orchard St. No tickets necessary.)

CORNELIA STREET CAFÉ

Ken Waldman, a fiddler and a poet from Alaska, reads from his work in the company of his fellow-poets Marlene Rosen Fine and Iris Lee. The event is organized by the *New York Quarterly*. (29 Cornelia St. Tickets at the door. Jan. 19 at 6.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

BIG APPLE CIRCUS

"Play On!," the latest show from Manhattan's one-ring wonder comes to a close at Lincoln Center. The title comes from Shakespeare ("If music be the food of love..."), but the show is pure big top. It features the Flying Cortés, from Columbia, on the trapeze; the Nanjing acrobats, from China; and a Kazakh equestrian, among other awe-inspiring acts. As always, the Big Apple Circus's Grandma the Clown will be on hand. (Damrosch Park. 212-962-5471. Through Jan. 18.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Christie's offers a sale of maritime decorative arts (Jan. 15) replete with Melvillean accoutrements: carved whale's teeth, chronometers, telescopes, and ship models galore, including several crafted (from memory) by prisoners of war while they endured long stays on prison ships during the endless Napoleonic wars. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ People with a room or apartment to fill may be pleasantly surprised at the unique and pretty objects and furniture to be found at Doyle's periodic "Doyle at Home" auctions; the first one of the year will be held on Jan. 14. (175 E. 87th St. 212-427-2730.)

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ON THE HORIZON

MOVIES POSITIF OUTLOOK

Jan. 30–Feb. 5

Founded in 1952 in Lyon as a left-wing alternative to *Cahiers du Cinéma*, the French film magazine *Positif* has long championed the independent American cinema. Its editor, Michel Ciment, will present a series at Walter Reade that includes Paul Schrader's "Blue Collar," James Toback's "Fingers," and "Wanda," a 1970 drama written and directed by—and starring—Barbara Loden, Elia Kazan's wife. (212-875-5610.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND NO DEPRESSION

Feb. 1–27

Seventy years ago, Count Basie and Duke Ellington were in their prime as bandleaders and composers, "Gone with the Wind" was released, and Raymond Chandler's "The Big Sleep" was published. Symphony Space takes a look at these and other works from the heyday of the New Deal with "The 1939 Project: American Arts at a Turning Point," featuring appearances by E. L. Doctorow, Eisa Davis, Leon Botstein, and others. (www.symphonyspace.org.)

THE THEATRE LUCK BE A LADY

Feb. 4

Oliver Platt, Craig Bierko, and Lauren Graham star in the first Broadway revival in seventeen years of "Guys and Dolls." Des McAnuff directs, at the newly renovated Nederlander. (212-239-6200.)

ART COPTIC NERVE

Feb. 13–May 10

In the exhibition "Unearthing the Truth: Egypt's Pagan and Coptic Sculpture," the Brooklyn Museum will exhibit ancient

limestone carvings alongside several modern forgeries. (718-638-5000.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC OPEN HOUSE

Feb. 22

Alice Tully Hall, radically redesigned by the architects of Diller Scofidio + Renfro, reopens with "First Look," a festive concert featuring performances from Jordi Savall, Leon Fleisher, the Emerson String Quartet, and members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. (212-721-6500.)

"The 1939 Project," at Symphony Space.

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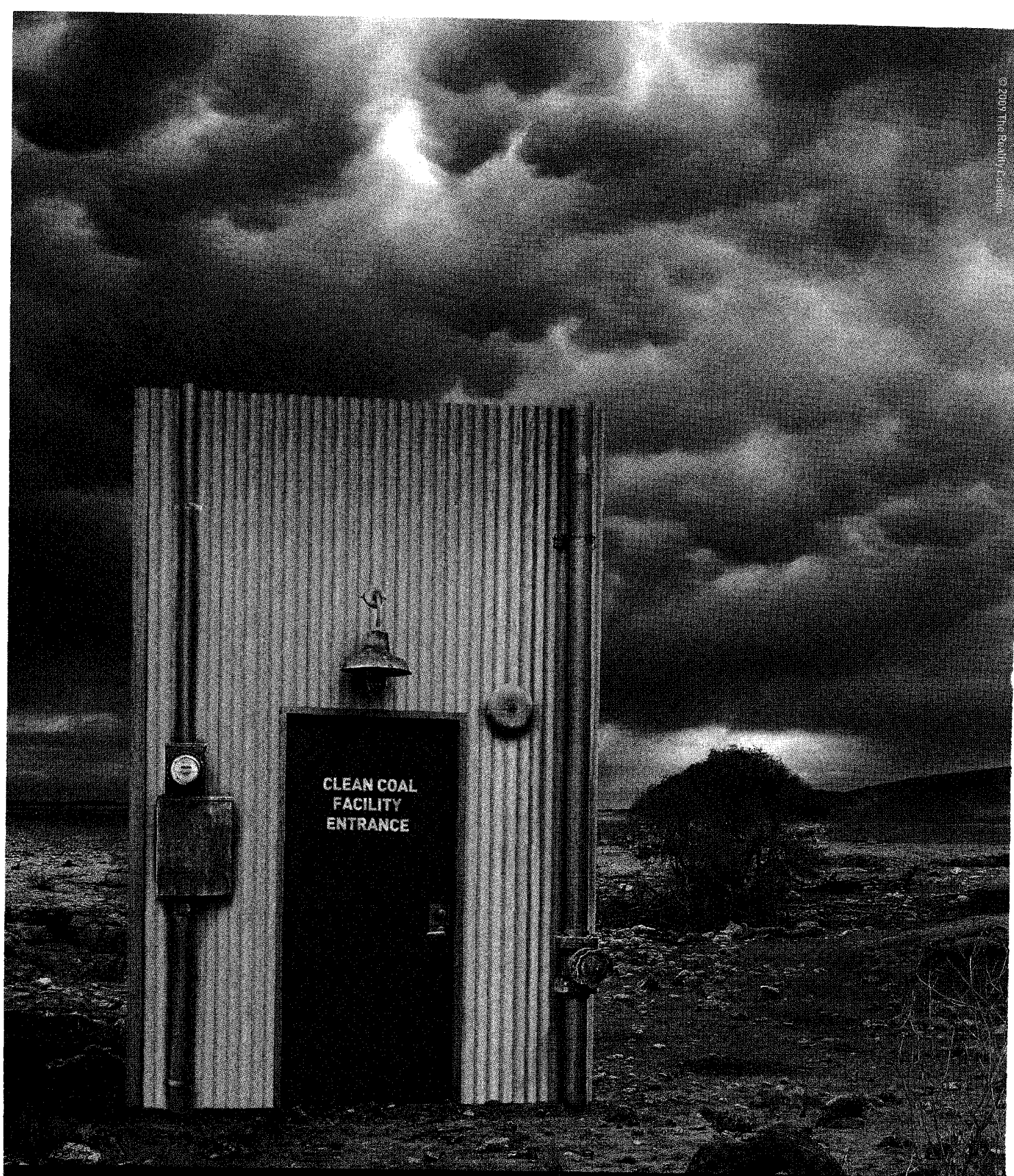
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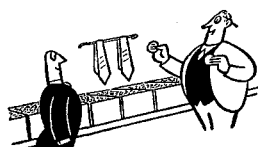
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT TRANSITIONING



Barack Obama's campaign for President, which was as much about old-fashioned grassroots politicking as it was about high-tech dazzle, was big on paraphernalia—lawn signs, T-shirts, baseball caps, bumper stickers, and, of course, buttons. It may have set some sort of record for campaign buttons, including at least one meta-button: tiny pictures of old buttons—"I Like Ike" and the like—with the legend "BUTTON COLLECTORS FOR OBAMA." But where Obama enthusiasts have truly broken new ground is in the emerging field of post-campaign buttons. The polls had barely closed when the first "YES WE DID" buttons hit the streets, and since then there has been a profusion of pins—one shows the Obamas with their daughters under the words "AMERICA'S FIRST FAMILY"—that likewise seem designed to reassure their wearers that, yes, Obama's victory really happened and, yes, his Presidency is really going to happen, too. It's as if people haven't wanted to let go of their amazement.

At the moment, hard-core Obama-philes are clicking on video clips from "Check, Please!," a Chicago public-television show that, each week, features three different local citizens sitting around a table with the host and talking about their favorite restaurants. The

clips are from an early episode, taped in August of 2001, in which one local, a skinny state senator from Hyde Park, praises the comfort cuisine of the Dixie Kitchen, a neighborhood favorite. "I'm not looking for some fancy presentation or extraordinarily subtle flavors," Barack Obama explains. "What I'm looking for is food that tastes good for a good price." The episode will be broadcast for the first time a few days before the Inauguration; it wasn't aired at the time, the *Chicago Tribune* reports, because Obama "was too good—too thoughtful, too articulate, not enough of an amateur." For the Obama-besotted, the message is clear: This guy can do anything. He even reviews restaurants.

It has been widely said that never has

so much been expected of an incoming President, but that's only half right. The public clearly expects quick action, but the outlook for the near future is so grim that few expect quick results. Obama himself has been stressing the urgency of the first and the need for patience with regard to the second. Speaking on the economy last Thursday at George Mason University, he called for "dramatic action as soon as possible" to deal with "a crisis unlike any we have seen in our lifetime, a crisis that has only deepened over the last few weeks." Resolving that crisis, he added, "will take time—perhaps many years." What the public does anticipate is not miracles but competence, and its confidence in Obama's abilities has grown. In the most recent survey—a CNN/Opinion Research Corporation poll released on December 24th—eighty-two per cent of those questioned said they approved of Obama's performance during the transition. Of course, the esteem in which Presidents-elect are held always increases as the rancor of the campaign begins to fade, and feelings of good will are always plentiful at Christmas-time. Still, Obama's ratings are unusually high—fifteen points higher than either of his two predecessors' at the corresponding moment in their transitions, and arguably higher than anyone's since the modern era of polling began. "Obama walks in with nearly twice the support on the economy that President-elect Clinton had in January, 1993, and he beats Ronald Reagan as well," Keating Holland, CNN's polling director, said.

Obama's transition has unspooled in



much the same way his campaign did: smoothly, calmly, and on time. His choices for Cabinet and White House staff positions have been impressive overall, some of them—that of Steven Chu, the Nobel laureate and director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, for example—inspired. With his appointments, Obama has demonstrated, among other things, self-confidence (he picked his most formidable rival, Senator Hillary Clinton, to be Secretary of State), a determination to unify his own party (ditto), a willingness to recruit from the other one (he is keeping Robert Gates as Secretary of Defense), and a healthy regard for the prerogatives and sensitivities of Congress (his choice for Secretary of Health and Human Services, the former Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle, will also head a White House office on health-care reform). If his selections for the top legal, intelligence, science, and environmental jobs are any guide, he is serious about ending the American government's sickening embrace of torture, its hostility to science, its subservience to polluters, and its suicide-bomber approach to global warming. As the day of the transfer of power comes closer, Obama has run into some choppy weather—most recently, crosswinds over the size and composition of an economic-stimulus package—but the effect on his popularity has been minimal.

The President-elect's performance can't fully explain the public's welcoming view of him. Part of it, surely, reflects an eagerness to be rid of the incumbent. A gangly Illinois politician whom "the

base" would today label a RINO—a Republican in Name Only—once pointed out that you can fool some of the people all of the time. We now know how many "some" is: twenty-seven per cent. That's the proportion of Americans who, according to CNN, cling to the belief that George W. Bush has done a good job. The wonder is that this number is still in the double digits, given his comprehensively disastrous record. During the eight years of the second President Bush, the unemployment rate went from 4.2 per cent to 7.2 per cent and climbing; consumer confidence dropped to an all-time low; a budget surplus of two hundred billion dollars became a deficit of that plus a trillion; more than a million families fell into poverty; the ranks of those without health insurance rose by six million; and the fruits of the nation's economic growth went almost entirely to the rich, while family incomes in the middle and below declined. What role the Bush Administration's downgrading of terrorism as a foreign-policy priority played in the success of the 9/11 attacks cannot be known, but there is no doubting its responsibility for the launching and mismanagement of the unprovoked war in Iraq, with all its attendant suffering; for allowing the justified war in Afghanistan to slide to the edge of defeat; and for the vertiginous worldwide decline of America's influence, prestige, power, and moral standing.

The televised "legacy interviews" that Bush has granted have been notable for the interviewee's shruggings-off of responsibility for what he has wrought,

abroad and at home. He's sorry about the inartfulness of "dead or alive" and "bring 'em on" and "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED," but not about the war or its conduct. And in a discussion of the economic catastrophe he is about to bequeath to his successor, there is this exchange, with ABC's Charles Gibson:

GIBSON: Do you feel in any way responsible for what's happening?

BUSH: You know, I've been the President during this period of time. But I think when the history of this period is written people will realize a lot of the decisions that were made on Wall Street took place over, you know, a decade or so before I arrived as President, during I arrived as President. I'm sorry it's happening, of course. Obviously, I don't like the idea of people losing jobs or being worried about their 401(k)s.

A nice epitaph for "compassionate conservatism"—feckless to the end. And the end, at long last, is nigh.

—Hendrik Hertzberg

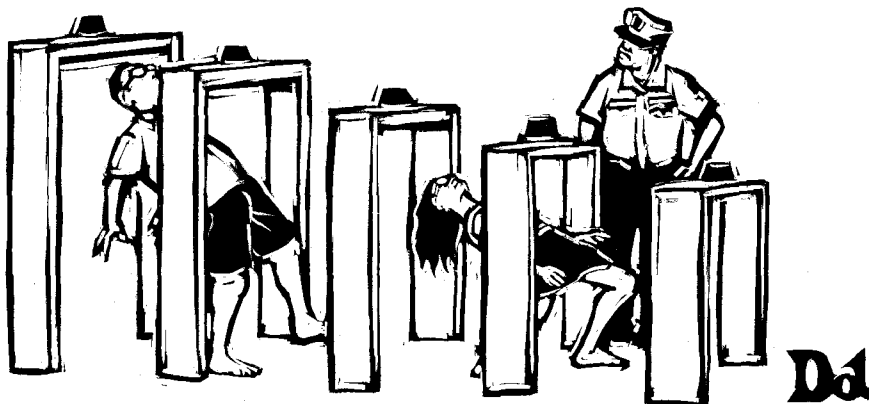
FAMILY TREE DEPT. CUZ



Cousins: for politicians, like the rest of us, they have a way of turning up. Last week, Domenico Panetta, a former mayor of the Italian town of Sidero, historically a Mafia stronghold, surfaced to comment on the appointment of his cousin Leon to head the C.I.A. "Maybe in his new job he'll be able to come to Europe and to Italy and even visit us in Calabria," he told the *Times* of London. Meanwhile, in New York City, Christopher Kennedy Lawford, a Los Angeles writer and actor, made an appearance on his cousin Caroline Kennedy's home turf.

In 2003, Lawford—divorcing, diagnosed with hepatitis C—was living in what he called "a teardown on the West Side of L.A. that my cousin owned and was letting me squat in until I put my life back together." One morning, he received a call from a journalist, who was hoping to secure Lawford's participation in a book about the Kennedy men. Afterward, Lawford had an epiphany—maybe *he* had a story to tell—the result of which was a memoir, "Symptoms of Withdrawal." Last month, he came out

CARIBBEAN AIRPORT SECURITY



with “Moments of Clarity,” a book of first-person recollections about turning points in the lives of addicts. Its contributors include Ed Begley, Jr. (“My cousin Bobby Kennedy introduced us”), and Alec Baldwin (“He’d show up at the Robert F. Kennedy Tennis Tournament at Forest Hills and drive all my sisters and female cousins crazy”). The book is dedicated to Lawford’s cousin



Christopher Kennedy Lawford

David Kennedy, who died of a drug overdose at the age of twenty-eight. The introduction is by Patrick Kennedy, another cousin. The effect is something like sitting in on Thanksgiving dinner at Hyannis Port, at the kids’ table.

Lawford’s “moment of clarity”—he has been sober since—occurred on February 17, 1986, when he woke up, decided things could not get any worse, and called a cousin. “He was the one person who I had sort of competed with my entire life,” Lawford recalled at a party held in his honor by Caron Treatment Centers, an organization for which he serves as a spokesman and consultant. Over the tinkle of a piano, Lawford—tanned, yoga-bodied, wearing a lavender dress shirt, speaking in gravelly affirmations—continued, “That’s a testament to my level of surrender, that I was willing to call the one guy I didn’t want to call, because he had found a way out of it himself.”

Part of Lawford’s work with Caron is to raise awareness of the fact that addiction is a family disease. He said, “If somebody had really taken me at fifteen years old and said, ‘You’re going to change your life,’ like my Aunt Eunice did with some of my cousins, it might have made a difference.” (In the book, he writes, “My mom once said, ‘You can’t make the daiquiris anymore?’”)

Lawford has three sisters, all of whom were in attendance, but his cousins, he said, were effectively siblings, too: “We went skiing in the wintertime, we went to the Cape in the summertime, we went to the Amazon to conquer rivers.” His generation of Kennedys is not really “cliqued out,” but factions do exist. For instance, the California cousins. “That’s me, Bobby Shriver, and Maria,” Lawford said. “I talk to them, but I don’t see them a lot.” He went on, “I didn’t intend on becoming a public advocate.... I started a novel, and then I got sort of hijacked into this book. I didn’t want to do a recovery book. I do my recovery work privately, quietly—”

For a minute, Lawford was sounding a lot like another Kennedy cousin who has recently heeded the call of public service. Is being thrust into the spotlight for the betterment of humanity the clan’s latest curse?

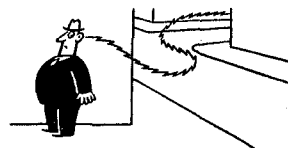
Lawford was sympathetic to his cousin Caroline’s plight. “I don’t have the same kind of judgment about my situation that she’s facing,” he said. “I mean, people are, like, *welcoming* me. With her, it’s been a tough thing.” His advice: “I would say, to thine own self be true. If this is really in your heart, then you’ve got to do it. Fuck what people say.” (Just don’t ask Caroline, who recently snapped at *Times* reporters, about *her* moment of clarity.)

The same day, the Social Security Administration introduced a new ad campaign, fronted by Patty Duke, who will reprise the roles of Patty Lane and her identical cousin Cathy. One wondered what the Lane girls, the most famous cousins of all, would have made of Caroline, the most famous of all her cousins. “Well, Patty would just be tickled to death, having certainly been enamored with the Kennedys,” Duke said. “Cathy would think that Caroline’s going to have to prove to all the cynics

that she can do the job. And then Patty and Cathy’s mother here”—she meant herself—“thinks that of course she’s prepared. When I see people on TV saying that she’s never done anything, I think, Oh, give it a rest!”

—Lauren Collins

BRAVE NEW WORLD HACK ATTACK



Late last Tuesday night, Pam Spaulding tried to post an entry on her blog, Pam’s House Blend, from her home in Durham, North Carolina. There was a technical glitch, and she couldn’t publish her post. To find the source of the problem, Spaulding decided to go to the Web site for SoapBlox, a small company in Denver that administers the sites for more than a hundred liberal blogs around the country, including Pam’s House Blend, which focusses on gay and lesbian issues. There the evidence of hacking was obvious: SoapBlox.net had been redesigned, with a logo of a hand and a message that said “destroying online communities.” Spaulding tried to reach the owner and sole employee of SoapBlox, Paul Preston, but he was already overwhelmed by similar complaints from blogs around the country. “When I woke up on Wednesday,” Preston said, “I started checking my phone and e-mail, and people were like, ‘Oh my God!’”

Almost accidentally, Preston had come to control a critical crossroads in the netroots nation: the informal community of progressive bloggers and online activists who now play an important role in Democratic Party politics. In 2003, after Preston graduated from Ohio State, he started posting comments about Howard Dean’s Presidential campaign on Daily Kos, the pioneering liberal blog founded by Markos Moulitsas. “The great thing about Kos is that the software made it easy for lots of people to join in,” Preston said. “I thought it would be a good idea to reverse engineer it—to write software that would allow other people

to create blogs that could work the same way."

Preston moved to Denver after the 2004 elections, to take a job in Web-site development, and, as a sideline, started SoapBlox. From the beginning, he charged modest prices—which now range from fifteen to forty dollars a month. "I never did a single advertisement, but the thing just took off," he said.

The experience of Dean Barker, a co-founder and the managing editor of Blue Hampshire, a blog devoted to Democratic politics in the Granite State, was typical. "We documented the whole New Hampshire primary season," Barker, whose day job is teaching Latin, said. "We did questionnaires with the Presidential candidates. The state-party chair posts with us all the time. We helped get the new Democratic senator elected in 2008." A variety of other state-based blogs, like Calitics (California), the Albany Project (New York), and Prairie State Blue (Illinois), all relied on Preston's software. And last week two dozen of the sites hosted by SoapBlox appeared to have been wiped out by hackers.

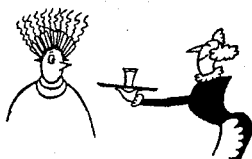
Preston yielded to despair. At 8:15 A.M. on Wednesday, he posted an announcement. "All these hackers messing with our stuff, and we here at SoapBlox have no clue what to do," he wrote. "We don't have enough knowledge, time, money, or care to fix it. Consider this the 'We're Out of Business' post." But, to his surprise, the blogging world, unbidden, came to his rescue, offering money and technical support. By the end of the day, all the sites were up and running. On Thursday, Preston wrote, "We're not dead yet."

Still, the experience suggested that the blog world's seat-of-the-pants style may not be suitable for a major political force. "We have built this new progressive movement on a lot of volunteer labor, a shoestring budget, a lot of heart and soul, but not a lot of resources," said Moulitsas, whose Daily Kos blog now generates enough advertising income to support a paid staff of eight. "We've got to professionalize our movement, and we can't rely only on labors of love, like what Paul did." Preston plans to assemble a bigger team and to get some backup servers. As for the

hacking, he doesn't know who did it; he has retained a lawyer. In a message on the SoapBlox home page, the vandals wrote, "Hacked By Astalavista Team." Preston said, "I don't have a clue what that means."

—Jeffrey Toobin

TEST-DRIVE DEPT. SLOWDOWN



A few months back, as the modern financial system was revealing itself to be a hyper-stimulated and underfunded wreck, some unfamiliar merchandise turned up in midtown, along with a pitch: "This might be just the thing for jittery Wall Street right now." The merchandise was liquid—a six-pack of tall purple cans with the word "DRANK" printed beneath a drawing of what looked like a bottle of Robitussin, along with the slogan "Slow Your Roll." To a hip-hop fan, if not to a banker, the allusion is obvious: purple drank is a kind of instant moonshine, originating in the Houston rap scene, and consisting primarily of cough syrup and 7UP. (Variations abound, some featuring Jolly Ranchers.) It's a sedative, and therefore well suited to the slow, vaguely psychedelic Southern rap favored by artists like Lil Wayne, whose song "Me and My Drank" includes the lyrics "I'm a sip until I lean hard / Drink got me moving slower than a retard. . . . One more ounce will make me feel so great / Wait, now I can't feel my face."

If you think of Red Bull, with its glorified but dubious ingredient, taurine, as in some ways emblematic of the housing boom, then here, perhaps, was something grounding to take a day trader's eye off the relentlessly correcting ticker. The canned version, which is billed as an "anti-energy drink" and an "extreme relaxation beverage," will do nothing for your congestion; its active ingredients are melatonin, rose hips, and valerian root. (The homespun stuff works best with codeine and promethazine.) "Eight ounces really puts you to sleep," a publicist said. Each can contains sixteen ounces: a Rip Van

Winkle special. It tastes like a faintly carbonated grape Kool-Aid, with hints of Dimetapp.

Before a recent office party, a journalist, moonlighting, in the spirit of the business cycle, as a social scientist, devised an experiment to test the Drank. As a control, competitor beverages were selected from the swag cabinet: Borgnine's Coffee Soda (as in Ernest) and Folonari Pink Pinot Grigio—upper and downer. A variety of office-related sobriety tests were assigned, with marks for both competence and style—from walking the line (an old standard), to using an eyelash curler (fine motor skills), to sending faxes (operating heavy machinery). Observations were made as well about the socio-emotional re-



actions of the human subjects, all of whom were female. We'll call them Purple, Pink, and Brown, in accordance with the colors of liquid in their plastic lab cups.

"I'm drinking Barbie's blood," Pink said, dropping in a few ice cubes to dull the taste of her screw-top wine. (A bystander, sampling the pink Folonari, had described it as Manischewitz Lite.) Approaching the first test, she wore two-inch heels and strode purposefully back and forth, without wavering. "That's a ten," she said, with a social drinker's overconfidence. "That's the best I've ever done in my life."

Brown, ordinarily a decaf drinker, faltered slightly and set the cup of coffee soda down. "I'm about to have a heart attack," she said, shaking slightly.

"My heart has actually stopped, I think," Purple said. She took only a few steps before retreating to a sofa—"My roll has ground to a halt"—where the deluxe eyelash curler (with spring) was waiting. Pink showed Brown, a curling novice, how it was done. "You just work your way up the lash," she said, clamping, holding, and releasing with a steady right hand.

"This is changing my life!" Brown said, admiring the results in a handheld mirror.

Purple was satisfied with a harlequin effect. "One eyelid says, 'Come hither,'" she said. "The other, 'Go thither.'"

After two tests, results were inconclusive. Pink struggled with the fax machine as the ice in the Folonari melted and the alcohol took effect: she headed first for the printer, then dialled a wrong number, and eventually sent the pages upside down. Brown, now on high alert from the caffeine, ached it. "I'm letting mistakes happen," Purple drawled, as two pages snagged and scanned together. "I don't care."

Pink, with her portion of the procedure completed, joined the office party, switching eventually to sangria; Brown straightened up her desk; and Purple impressed herself by sending BlackBerry pictures of the experiment to her boss's e-mail account. If there was a lesson here about the relative merits of alternative-life-style beverages, it didn't emerge until three hours and thirty-two ounces of Drank later, when Purple reported that she was "feeling some 'd' words—'drowsy, dopey, dozy, dull'"—but that her judgment, far from being impaired, actually seemed improved. "I was on the Lands' End Web site, and put a lab coat in my shopping cart—it was on sale, marked down from thirty-five dollars to nine-ninety-nine—but then didn't complete the purchase," she said. Not a rap fan, she'd been listening to what she called "mid-tempo soul," and by 9 P.M., having since moved on to Circuit City's Web site (flat-screen TVs), she was napping. No money spent. Who knew that "capturing the laid-back culture of hip hop," as a Drank press release puts it, was a lesson in consumer restraint?

Pink had a headache, and Brown awoke the next morning with pinkeye.

—Ben McGrath

UNDERGROUND MR. SUBWAY



Let's say you're a screenwriter planning to pitch Harvey Weinstein on a movie about Orpheus and Eurydice. You're trying to think modern. And it comes to you: Orpheus, the musician so gifted that his playing charmed Hades into allowing Eurydice to return to life, is Jay-Z, and Eurydice is Beyoncé. Where do they live? Brooklyn. Where are the gates to the underworld? The subway. (Jay-Z named himself after the J and Z lines.) How does Orpheus find them? A map. And now you have room for John Tauranac, the historian who oversaw the design of the M.T.A. subway map, in 1979, and has now designed a new version, easier to read, far more helpful, with more information, printed on very nice stock.

For background, then, you should go to the party Tauranac's throwing to present the map to friends at the apartment he shares with his wife, Jane Bevans, a lawyer and a painter, on West End Avenue. Tauranac, a slim man with a sharp nose, gray hair, and round glasses, will meet you at the door. Take the wine he offers and follow him into his cavelike study, where he will tell you that he got interested in the underground because his father, Harold, was the residential manager of several hotels in Manhattan. As a teen-ager, Tauranac liked to use the hotel basements and side entrances to travel. "My father was at the Biltmore for years," Tauranac will say. "It stood above the tracks beneath Grand Central, and so he knew all the passageways. At the time, the early seventies, I was waiting tables at the Promenade Café in Rockefeller Center, and I realized that there must be a way to walk through underground passageways to Grand Central. I had been an English major, so I started to explore and write down the routes, and then it occurred to me that saying 'Take the third door to the right and go ten steps and turn left' was the cure for insomnia, so I started charting them instead." Eventually, the M.T.A. hired Tauranac, and in 1976 he became the

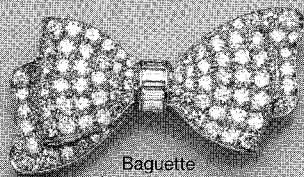
chief designer of the new subway map.

After a while, Tauranac will grow concerned that he is overlooking his guests, so you can return to the party, where he will pass around copies of his new map on a dinner plate, and everyone will unfold and examine them. On one side of the map is a schematic plan of the subway. From the 1948 Hagstrom map of the subway and the 1987 map of the London Underground, Tauranac borrowed the idea of delicately outlining the yellow N and R lines in black, making them much easier to trace. Where lines cross water, parks, and each other, they are bordered in white. On the reverse side is a geographic map, in which the territory the lines cross is the actual landscape of the city. On the schematic map, as on the 1979 version, the distances are artificial. Manhattan, which is tiny in comparison with the rest of the city—accounting for twenty-three square miles out of three hundred—appears larger than Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx, because the subway lines are more densely congregated and therefore need more space to be legible. The geographic side includes an enlarged scale version of Manhattan. There is an index of stations, "because if someone tells you to go to Zerega Avenue Station," Tauranac will say, "how do you know where it is?" There is also an index of places of interest and a map of late-night services. All this took a year and a half to assemble, and a great deal of painstaking work, but it was not quite as laborious as the effort involved in Tauranac's 2000 compact atlas, "Manhattan Block by Block," in which he recorded the buildings of note on every street and avenue in Manhattan. He would start out each day with a sheet of paper with blocks pencilled in, and walk the streets and write down what was there. Strangely, he could only work south to north. If he mapped north to south, the map in his head inverted itself, as if he were looking at it upside down. He has no idea why this was so.

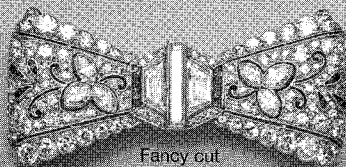
While everyone applauds Tauranac, collect your coat and have a brief conversation with Peter Derrick, the archivist of the Bronx County Historical Society. Simply nod when he says, "John is really the subway-map guy in New York. I mean, if you think about it, does anyone else's name really come to mind?"

—Alec Wilkinson

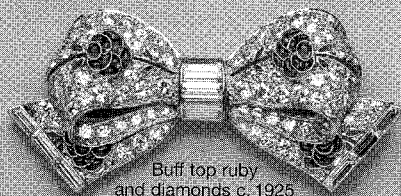
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ANNALS OF GAMES

SPREADING THE WORD

The new Scrabble mania.

BY JUDITH THURMAN

The 2008 Big Apple Scrabble Tournament took place on a weekend in early October. Meg Wolitzer, the novelist, had signed up for the three-day event with her son, Charlie Panek, a thirteen-year-old eighth grader who was competing in Division 4, the lowest tier, but was holding his own against adult rivals. His mother, in Division 3, invited me to watch them play their final games, and we arrived at the venue, a loft on lower Fifth Avenue, a little before nine o'clock on Sunday morning. A light rain was falling, and the Avenue had been closed to traffic for the Pulaski Day parade. A high-school marching band from New Jersey, wearing Polish folk costumes, was disembarking from a tour bus with a clatter of drums and cymbals. "Uh-oh," Wolitzer said anxiously. "Oompah music—just what we needed."

Players were drifting in from a hearty breakfast at the Comfort Diner, on West Twenty-third Street, armed with leftover carbohydrates. The diner's owner, Ira Freehof, runs the tournament. His assistant director, Joel Sherman, a wiry bachelor from the Bronx known as G.I. Joel, is a legendary player and a former world champion who figures prominently in "Word Freak," a pungently written best-seller by Stefan Fatsis about the competitive Scrabble subculture. (Sherman's nickname refers to the soundtrack of gastrointestinal disturbances that often punctuate his games.) When Wolitzer introduced us, Sherman covered his ears with both hands and huddled near a wall. "I have sinusitis," he said. "You're distracting me. Go away." Later in the afternoon, we had a cordial chat about his role as the "official adjudicator," but he was hard to draw out. "Socializing is a challenge for a lot of us in the Scrabble community," John Chew, the tournament's Webmaster, noted tactfully. At that moment, we heard a scream, followed by a thud, and a young woman fell to

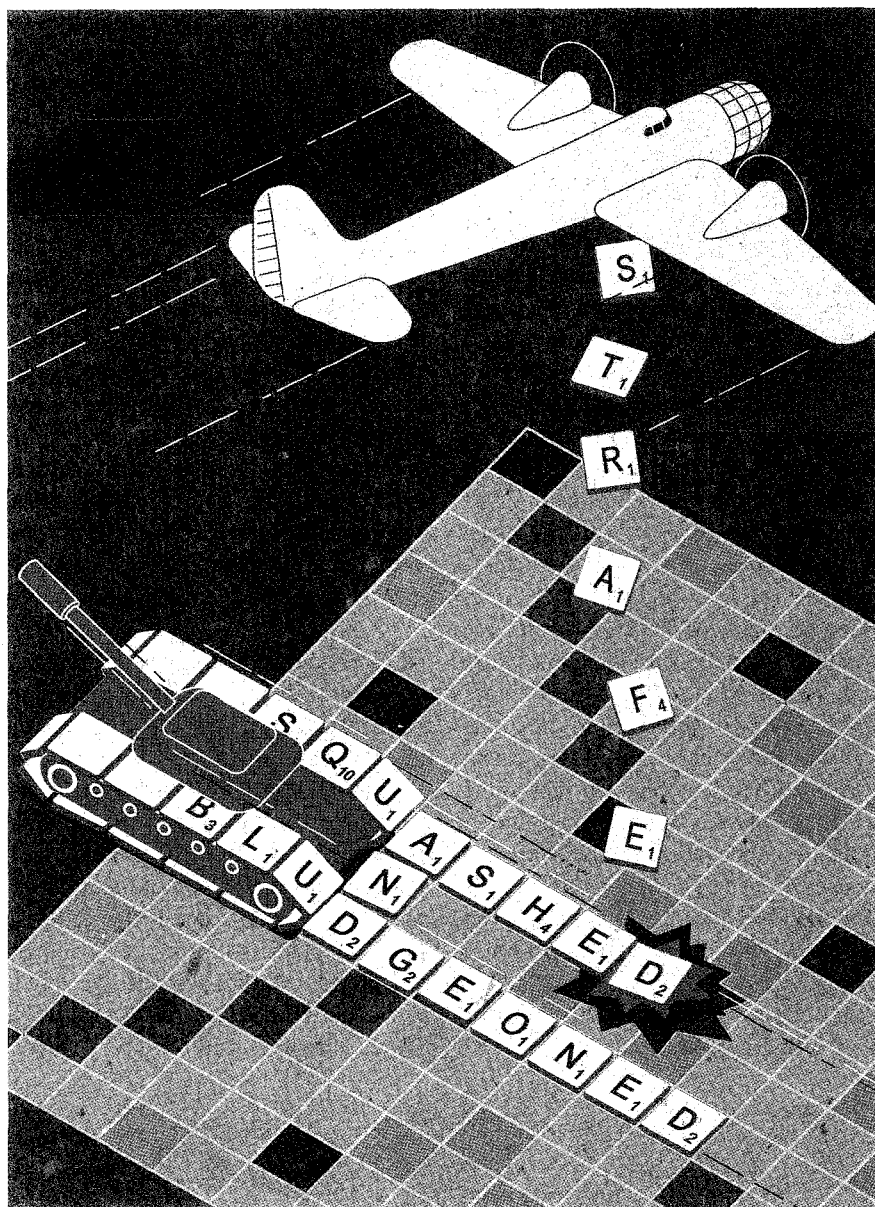
the floor, apparently having a convulsion. A few people rushed over to help, but she turned out to be convulsed, for obscure reasons, with hilarity.

The room was a bright rectangle crowded with tables arranged hierarchically. Wolitzer and her son found their places in "steerage," as she put it. Once the games began, a hush fell, and players hunched over their boards. The tension and the brainpower were palpable. Tiles rustled in cloth bags, and I watched as a top-seeded player laid "pealike," using all seven letters—a "bingo"—which his opponent countered with another bingo, "cr[e]jolise." Chew and his colleague Sherrie Saint John—anchors of a live Webcast—took the time to point out a few celebrities. Saint John whispered, "The guy with the red hair, taking notes and shaking his head at careless moves, is Adam Logan, a world champion. Like Joel, Adam doesn't talk much, but he went to Princeton at sixteen. Over there is Sal Piro, the president of the 'Rocky Horror Picture Show' fan club, playing with Frank Tangredi, who wrote an Off Broadway play. The handsome Latino guy to his right is Winter." Winter, a software engineer, just goes by one name. He is the subject of a documentary about his quest to visit every Starbucks on the planet. He told me, "I plot my itineraries to dovetail with Scrabble tournaments. So far, I've been to about eighty-nine hundred branches."

Wonkish misfits with awesome powers of recall, most of them male, seemed to dominate Division 1, and, during a break, I met John O'Laughlin, the baby-faced genius who designed Quackle—a Scrabble computer program that, Saint John said, "thinks almost like a human, which can't be said of everyone here." But Robin Pollock Daniel did not fit the mold. She is a chic blond Gestalt therapist from Toronto, and the highest-ranked female player in North America. While I was watching, she "bingoed out"

(emptying her rack to win with a seven-letter coup de grâce, “bli[n]dgr”), and whooped for joy. A little crowd gathered to congratulate her. A few feet away, however, the great Joe Edley didn’t look up or even twitch. He is a three-time national champion, and one of the few players to have memorized the entire dictionary of official Scrabble terms (which, if you were wondering, accepts “blind gut” as one word). Some thirty years ago, he became enamored of “The Seth Material,” a New Age text in eleven volumes that was supposedly dictated by Seth, an enlightened being, to Jane Roberts, a medium and psychic, who received the teachings while in a trance. Edley was inspired by Seth to realize his full human potential, and he chose to express it through Scrabble. Meditation and breathing exercises are part of his mental-fitness program. I hovered behind his chair (he has the posture of a yogi and the sang-froid of a Vulcan) while he replenished his rack. “Aneurin,” “denti,” “wab,” and “pavid” were already on the board, and he instantly played an arcane bingo: “residua.” Most top players have day jobs—many in computer science and mathematics—but Edley is a full-time pro, who earns a living by consulting on and writing about the game and teaching workshops for beginners. “There is no point to playing Scrabble unless I make it a spiritual practice,” he told me. “The secret is emotional control.”

Charlie Panek is a third-generation Scrabble fiend. His mother still plays with her mother, the novelist Hilma Wolitzer, who is seventy-eight. If novel-writing runs in families, so does Scrabble addiction, and I was hooked at a tender age by my own mother, an English teacher who always hated to sacrifice a lovely word like “glaive” or “deodar” for a more prosaic play with a higher score. She was initiated by my uncle Roy. In 1949, the second year that Scrabble was on the market, 2,413 sets were sold, and Roy bought one of them. He sailed a schooner on Chesapeake Bay, and a friend at the marina had previously introduced him to Scrabble’s precursor, Criss-Cross Words, which helped the old salts to while away their becalmed hours. After Roy died, I found the set in his den, with all the tiles—ninety-eight letters and two blanks—



still accounted for. (He had kept it with his boating trophies and Army relics, including a Luger that he’d captured at El Alamein.) It has since helped me to while away many of my own becalmed hours. One summer, on a torrid afternoon in Carl Schurz Park, the worn tiles, like a saint’s femur, wrought a miracle: I trounced my opponent with the bingo of a lifetime: “bar[o]ques,” worth three hundred and eleven points. (It spanned two triple-word squares, with the “q” on a double letter.)

Scrabble is enjoying a second heyday. The first was in the early nineteen-fifties, when demand for sets outstripped production. (In 1954, an advertisement in this magazine showed a wedding party stampeding from a church; the bride explains to the baffled clergyman

that the toy shop next door has a new shipment.) Between one and two million sets are sold yearly; one in every three American households is reported to own one; and thirty thousand new games are said to begin, somewhere in the world, every hour. Players of note are a heterogeneous confraternity that includes Barack Obama, the Queen of England, Madonna, Igor Stravinsky, Rosie O’Donnell, Duke Ellington, Nora Ephron, Meadow Soprano, Dustin Hoffman, Justin Timberlake, Chris Martin, Maya Angelou, Carol Burnett, Richard Nixon, and Ludacris, who plays “hip-hop” Scrabble, using words like “crunk,” “hizzo,” and “pajawa”—a version of the “dirty” Scrabble that was popular with Hollywood swingers fifty years ago. (I heard one of their ancient

jokes at the tournament: “‘Cervix’ is my favorite opening.”)

Scrabble is both mindless and cerebral, which may account for its appeal to writers—it gives you a chance to push words around without having to make them mean something. As a symbolic battleground of family life, it has often come in handy as a plot device. Graham Greene, Anne Tyler, Jonathan Franzen, Margaret Atwood, Sylvia Plath, Rick Moody, and Patricia Highsmith are among those who have savored the game, injected it into their fiction, or done both. In Ira Levin’s “Rosemary’s Baby,” the tiles spell out a Devil worshipper’s name. Nabokov’s Ada is an elegant player, probably in the image of her creator, who also designed crossword puzzles. In Spike Lee’s “She’s Gotta Have It,” the heroine’s suitors squabble over their board. And Scrabble, one imagines, would have appealed to Shakespeare and Molière—it lends itself to the comic comeuppances that occur at class intersections, where gullible plebeians affect courtly language, and pretentious know-it-alls are cornered by their bluffs. (In a famous episode of “The Simpsons,” Homer, Springfield’s Bottom, draws “oxidize” but plays “do,” while Bart tries to sucker him with “kwyjibo”—a species of ape, he explains, dumb and balding, that’s native to North America.)

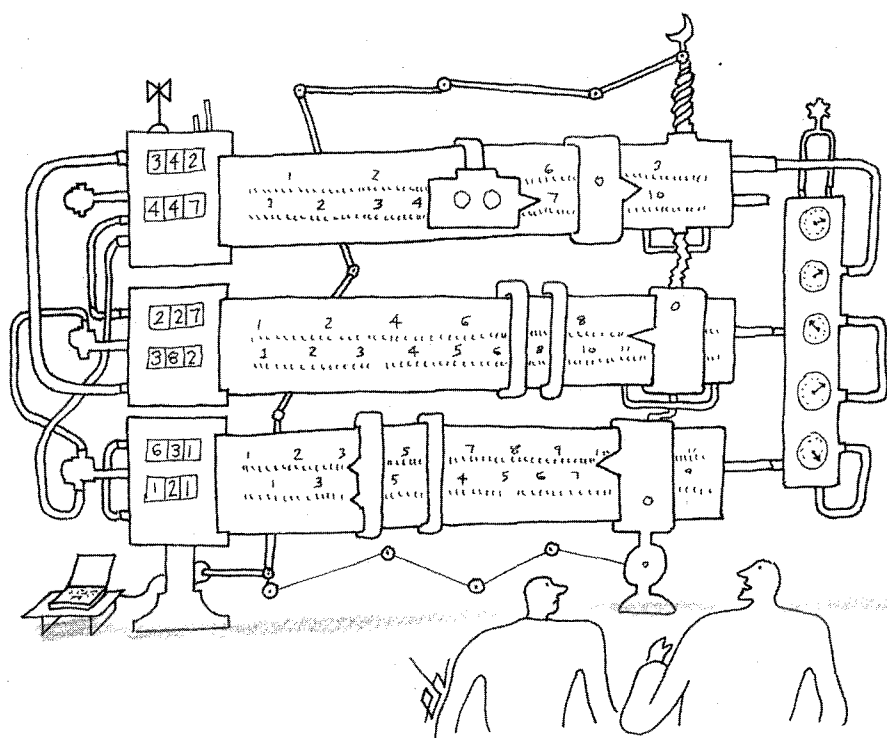
The game of Scrabble is native to America, though none of its charm has been lost in translation. The Senegalese, who mostly speak Wolof but play in French, celebrate their Scrabble champions as national heroes. Sets are available in twenty-eight other foreign languages, including Hebrew, Malay, and Welsh (which has seven “Y”s, three more than the English version; one “LL”; and two “FF”s), and in Braille. With the publication of a CD-ROM, in 1996, one could test one’s mettle against Quackle’s prototype, the formidable computer anagramming and crossword program known as Maven—Scrabble’s Deep Blue. But Maven, like all of us, is subject to the democratizing luck of the draw, and every so often even I have outplayed him.

The Scrabble board has fifteen rows, each with fifteen squares, sixty-one of them worth extra points. In chess or checkers, the only occult element is a player’s strategy: checkers is won or lost primarily on concentration; chess on skill, brainpower, and aggression. These factors count in Scrabble, too, though not, perhaps, to the degree that chance does. Brian Sheppard, the computer scientist who created Maven, described Scrabble, in the journal *Artificial Intelligence*, as “a game of imperfect information with a

large branching factor,” which means that no one can precisely control or anticipate the changing shape of the word tree.

Sheppard, John O’Laughlin, and their peers have modelled Scrabble mathematically in an ongoing effort to create an invincible program, and most champions are likelier to have played on their high-school chess team than to have written for the newspaper. The National Scrabble Championship is an annual event that was held last year in Orlando. The winner, Nigel Richards, a forty-one-year-old New Zealander, took home a purse of twenty-five thousand dollars. He also won the biennial World Championship, which was last held in Mumbai, and is more prestigious, though less lucrative (first prize was fifteen grand), and in 2007 he won the Thailand International, the largest of the major contests, with eight thousand entrants. (The Thai government promotes Scrabble as a tool for learning English, although some Thai masters are famous for competing at the highest echelons without speaking or understanding much, if any, of the language, relying on eidetic memory and spatial intelligence. English is just a quarry for the playing chips.)

Top competitors, whatever country they represent, subject themselves, like Olympic athletes, to gruelling training regimens—mostly with speed anagramming and memory exercises that employ flash cards. No one rises through the ranks of his local and national Scrabble associations without doing “alphagram” drills (mastering a long list of commonly occurring letter combinations that contain multiple bingos); memorizing the “vowel dumps” (“aalii,” “aerate,” “aioli,” et al.) that help to clear out an unpropitious rack; and learning the hundred and one two-letter words (“aa” to “za”), along with their common “hooks” (“ex,” for example, has seven front hooks: “dex,” “hex,” “kex,” etc., while “ta” has sixteen back hooks—“tab,” “taj,” etc.). Also essential is a knowledge of scientific terminology; variant spellings (“wangun”/“wanigan”); high-scoring slang words (“zin,” “tranq,” “mojo”); exclamations (“jeez,” “huic,” “yucch”); eccentric plurals (one “pirog,” but two “piroghi”/“pirogen”); archaic past tenses (“throve,” “thriven”); units of weight or currency—a fertile category (“jiao,” “qursh,” “vatu,” and “zloty,” among doz-



“Well, it’s as we suspected—twelve inches equals a foot.”

ens); and admissible letters of a foreign alphabet ("kaph," "peh," and "fe," all Hebrew, but I could go on). "*Mens sana in corpore sano*" may not be Scrabble's motto, but there are many odd deities on Olympus, and any virtuoso who can unscramble a fifteen-letter anagram in a minute or two, mentally, as Sherman, Edley, and Logan can, deserves a niche there. (You can try one of the words that humbled, but also hooked, Stefan Fatsis, who started his research as an embedded reporter and became a combatant: "megachiropteran." Your time is up—it's "cinematographer.")

Crazes behave like epidemics, but in Scrabble's case the bug has never died out, and the Internet has revived its potency. Toward the end of 2000, games.com, a site then owned by Atari, which was owned by Hasbro, which controls the rights to Scrabble in North America (Mattel owns the trademark for the rest of the world), offered one of the first interactive, multiplayer versions of the game, and it was suddenly possible, at whatever hour, to find a partner, or to make a foursome, and to join a community of besotted logophiles from every continent. (A number of Scrabble clubs also hosted games, and still do, including The Pixie Pit, a British site, and ISC.ro, which is frequented by Joel Sherman and many other cognoscenti.) I have probably met more interesting strangers playing online Scrabble than I have in a lifetime of travel to exotic places. A Ghanaian taxi-driver from Brooklyn invited me to Prospect Park, where his Scrabble club held weekend tournaments. A tattoo artist in Alberta surprised me, between plays, with her knowledge of Gerard Manley Hopkins. An Oxford don beat me soundly, but so did a used-car salesman. I have played Aussies and New Zealanders (Scrabble is popular in the antipodes), an impertinent prodigy who confessed to being eleven, a cardsharp in Las Vegas, a lawyer in Bangalore who traded places with his wife for the endgame ("She's the family closer," he said), a corgi breeder, and a Jane Austen fan ("elizabethnet"), who added a few words that Jane never used—"feeb," "ottar," "vas," and "zineb"—to my vocabulary.

A virtual board is identical to the horizontal model. The computer randomly assigns the tiles, and you can

swap or shuffle them electronically. Once you register, your point rating (a kind of batting average) is posted next to your screen name. It is calculated by the system used to seed competitors in club and tournament play, where games are weighted, so that you forfeit more points for losing to a weaker player, and win more for beating someone who outranks you. The urge to improve one's status in the pecking order easily becomes a fixation that sometimes inspires unsportsmanlike behavior: downloading an anagramming program, or disconnecting from the server to avert a loss. And here I should like to alert those parents and educators who promote Scrabble as a wholesome exercise for young minds that the online version, like amphetamines or video games, seems to induce a state of fiendish hyperfocus in susceptible subjects. ScrabbleBlitz (high-speed Scrabble), on games.com, transformed Nora Ephron, she wrote, into a "teenage boy." The *Times* columnist Deborah Solomon told me, "I used to be a productive individual who read serious fiction in the hours before I went to sleep. But that was in the innocent, un-Scrabbled past." She plays every night on ISC under the screen name Duchamp—a nod to the French Dadaist, who claimed to have renounced art for chess, and who, Solomon says, "in that sense, deserves to be seen as a pioneer of the ruined-by-games online present." My own ruination became apparent to me one morning, as dawn was breaking, after an all-night marathon with a regular partner who called himself qatmandu ("qat" is one of eleven admissible "q" words without a "u"). Careless with exhaustion, I failed to block a triple-letter score that permitted him to exit with a game-cinching, fifty-point play: "xi" and "xu." ("Xi" is a Greek letter; "xu" is a monetary unit of Vietnam.)

In 2004, a new gaming site, quadplex.com, began offering free Scrabble, and among its habitués were two plump, bookish brothers in Calcutta—Rajat and Jayant Agarwalla—who were twenty-three and eighteen, respectively. They grew up in an extended Marwari family (the Marwaris are famous traders), and, in 2000, Rajat, who has a business degree from the University of Bradford, in En-

gland, started a software company that Jayant, who is an avid tournament player (India is a Scrabble hotbed), joined as a partner when he finished college. They originally employed three engineers, and now have a staff of twenty-five.

The Agarwallas became "distracted," Jayant told the *Calcutta Telegraph*, when Quadplex started charging a fee—like many of their peers in the Napster generation, the brothers ardently believe that "the contents on the Internet should be free as far as possible so people across the world benefit from them." In 2005, they decided to implement a word game identical to Scrabble in most respects, which they originally called Bingo-Binge. Too many bugs, and too much volume, crashed the Web site, and an improved version of the program, renamed Scrabulous, was released later that year. At the suggestion of an American user, Jayant said, the brothers "checked out" Facebook, and, in 2007, they launched a Scrabulous application that quickly became Facebook's most popular game. It is widely rumored that Hasbro offered to pay ten million dollars for it, although the company denies having done so, and, in July, it sued for copyright infringement. Facebook was pressured to disable the application in North America, infuriating some of the half million users who were logging on every day. (A number of them argued that Hasbro should have been grateful to the Agarwallas for recruiting a new generation of customers for the travel sets, custom editions, tile jewelry, and other Scrabble merchandise and paraphernalia on the market.) Mattel, meanwhile, had pursued legal action in India. In late September, the Delhi High Court ruled in the brothers' favor: it was legitimate to clone the Scrabble board for online play, so long as its name didn't capitalize on the trademark. Scrabulous has since become Lexulous. It is played with eight tiles, and the bonus squares have been rearranged. As of this writing, the Web site and the Facebook application are up and running, in competition with an authorized Scrabble application designed by Electronic Arts. Jayant told me via e-mail that his lawyers had advised him to make no comment while Mattel's appeal is pending. (Hasbro dropped its suit in December.) He and Rajat continue to collect ad rev-

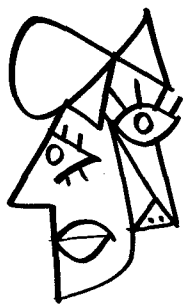
enues from their site. They have, however, professed innocence of any intent to trespass on intellectual property, casting their enterprise as a public service.

Before Lexulous, Scrabulous, Scrabble, and Criss-Cross Words, there was a game called Lexiko. It was invented during the Depression by Alfred Mosher Butts, a young architect from New York. (If there were a Nobel Prize for relieving the ennui of adolescence, family life, unhappy marriages, happy marriages, and the Friday after Thanksgiving, he would deserve it.) Butts lost twenty dollars on Lexiko the first year he was in business. He eventually earned about a million dollars in royalties from Scrabble, and kept track of every penny, Fatsis writes, using some of it to buy back an ancestral farmhouse near Poughkeepsie, but he was never resentful of the vastly greater profits that accrued to others. (One has the feeling that he wouldn't have bothered to sue the Agarwallas.)

When Butts's architectural firm downsized, in 1931, and he was laid off, he took stock of his mental assets, and decided to invent a game. The idea for Lexiko came to him while reading "The Gold Bug," a story by Edgar Allan Poe, in which the hero decodes a cipher that protects the hiding place of a pirate treasure by correlating its symbols with the alphabet. Butts realized that the key to Lexiko would be a formula for distributing the vowels and consonants, and assigning them point values, that represented their relative frequency in educated English usage. In the course of his research, he hand-computed every letter in every word on the pages of several newspapers, primarily the *Times*. The Scrabble letter count is a tribute both to his genius and to his doggedness. A more generous allotment of "S"s or blanks, for example, would have made the game too easy, and a stingier allotment of "E"s, "A"s, and "R"s would have made it too discouraging. With only four "U"s, the "Q" is a potential albatross but also, with a value of ten points, a potential bonanza. If you try to play English Scrabble with a French set, you begin to appreciate how much finesse and calculation Butts's feat required.

Butts, by his own admission, wasn't a

good speller, and he was always happy when his Scrabble score reached the humble benchmark of three hundred points. (The highest individual score on record is eight hundred and thirty.) His wife, Nina, a former schoolteacher—she had, in fact, been Alfred's teacher—is said to have outplayed him. But the couple's matches helped Butts to tinker with the game's design. He added the board, the blanks, and



the colored premium squares that doubled or tripled words and letters, and he changed the name to Criss-Cross Words, in 1938. The big game companies, however, rebuffed his overtures, and the U.S. Patent Office twice rejected his applications.

By word of mouth, Criss-Cross Words began to acquire a small fan base, and Washington, D.C., where my uncle Roy spent his shore life, was one of its epicenters. Butts made the sets in his living room, and sold them by mail order—at two dollars each, plus a quarter for shipping. Friends did the product testing, and gave him their critiques. He also organized Criss-Cross socials at his parish church, in Jackson Heights, Queens. One of the testers, a social worker, gave a copy of the game to James Brunot, who had served under President Roosevelt, as the executive director of the War Relief Control Board. Brunot was ready for a new career, and, in 1947, he approached Butts with a business plan: he would assume responsibility for the manufacturing and the marketing of the game and pay Butts a royalty. Alfred accepted—he was tired of his unprofitable cottage industry, and his firm had rehired him.

Brunot made some minor changes to the board and to the rules, notably adding a fifty-point bonus for using all seven letters. He and his wife also came up with a catchier name. But Scrabble was a sleeper until 1952, when Jack Straus, the chairman of Macy's, who had discovered the game while on vacation, placed a big order, which triggered an avalanche. Brunot, his wife, and a small staff of workers had been making the sets in a converted schoolhouse in Connecticut, but they couldn't keep up with the demand. He licensed Scrabble to Selchow & Righter, the company that owned Parcheesi (which was later sold to Coleco Industries, which went bankrupt and was

acquired by Hasbro in 1989). By 1954, Fatsis writes, "an astounding 3,798,555 units of Scrabble were sold." (Total sales are now estimated to be more than a hundred million sets, in twenty-one countries.) David Riley, the director of the NPD Group, a market-research company that tracks the toy and game industry, described Scrabble to me as "one of the greatest success stories in the business." He added, "New dolls, stuffed animals, action figures, and lawn games are fads that come and go, but Scrabble, like Monopoly, is an evergreen."

Until last spring, when I fell off the wagon and registered my old nom de guerre on scrabulous.com, I hadn't played Scrabble for a year, except once, at a ski lodge, with an old friend, on my uncle's set—I'd sworn off the Net. The new site took some getting used to. Some of its features were appealing—you could, for example, set your dictionary preference. At a hundred and seventy-eight thousand six hundred and ninety-one words, the Tournament Word List (TWL), used in the United States, Canada, Israel, and Thailand, is considerably shorter than SOWPODS, the combined American and British tournament word list (two hundred and sixty-seven thousand seven hundred and fifty-one words), which is used everywhere else that Scrabble is played in English. Games.com automatically censored slurs, curses, and profanities. Not every player was happy to be deprived of versatile little score-enhancers like "wog," "spic," "jew" (the verb), "lez," "goy," "honky," "cunt," "darkie," and "fuck." Even the chat box blocked bad language, and some of the best players were super-friendly evangelicals whom I met late at night, perhaps resisting more carnal temptations. Temptation takes many forms, however, and loitering in a "lobby"—an entrance foyer where one waits for a "table"—before leaving it to pair off with a perfect stranger isn't unlike cruising a mixer. You size up potential partners by their ratings and their screen names—a mask tells something about the face behind it.

At games.com, the matches were untimed, and sometimes one got stuck with a dawdler. My favorite partners, however, shared my traditional view that fifty minutes, the length of a tournament game, was just brisk enough and just leisurely

enough to make the most of one's tiles. (I doubt that I could have found some of my proudest bingos—"ki[n]gpins," "reovir[u]s," and "tequila"—had I been rushed.) At lexulous.com, you can choose a practice game against the computer, although, compared with Maven or Quackle, the Agarwallas' digital mastermind is a nitwit who leaves the triple-word scores undefended, offers lame hints, misses bingos, and squanders the blanks, and whom I beat at least half the time. Most people, however, seem to prefer a ten-minute quickie, and it took me a while to realize that some of my perkier opponents were actually "coffeehousing"—trying to rattle my concentration by keeping up a steady stream of banter while the clock was ticking.

Facebook is a place for more desultory encounters, live or delayed, single or several at a time, some lasting all day, some for a month, with players making a word whenever the spirit moves them. (A monthlong game of Scrabble, in my opinion, is about as appealing as a monthlong

sex act.) The young have always mocked their elders by throwing time away, and Scrabulous became notorious among employers as a waster of man-hours. Last year, a YouTube takeoff by Kreole Parody, set to the tune of Fergie's "Glamorous," captured the anarchic thrill. The song spawned parodies of the parody, including a video that featured a coy, scantily clad Fergie imitator furtively playing Scrabulous in her office cubicle; hiding her board from a prissy supervisor with a handlebar mustache; and, supine on a bed, receiving a shower of tiles, like a hip-hop Danaë. Another video nicely sums up the phenomenon: "Used to do all kinds of shit, all I do is type and sit." But, as Jayant Agarwalla pointed out, some players can't do much more than type and sit: they are the housebound, the elderly, or the disabled, for whom, as he put it, the game is "their only window to the world."

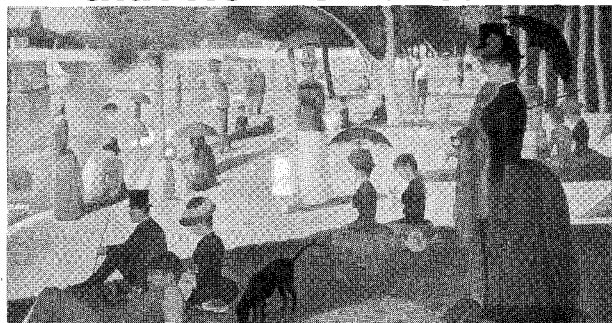
My own obsession has often made me a willing recluse. Until the CD-ROM went on sale, powered by Maven, I used to keep in form between matches by

playing Scrabble solitaire at the kitchen table. The greatest drawback was that I couldn't bluff myself by laying a "phony" (a plausible but nonexistent word like "pukha" or "burlock"), or by deliberately misspelling a common noun ("fettel") to lure an opponent into making it plural, then challenging it off the board—a legitimate if churlish ploy. In some games, I assigned the racks different strategic functions or personalities—the tortoise and the hare, logic and intuition—one hand playing fast and free, and the other with cool deliberation. When my son was little, this spectacle troubled him. "You're a schizo," he once told me, proud of his fancy insult, and shaking his head sadly at the score pad, which had page after page of columns marked "J1" and "J2." One day, he may appreciate that "schizo" is worth eight points more than "cervix" if you can open with it. ♦

NEWYORKER.COM

Judith Thurman talks about Scrabble.

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MY HOLOCAUST MEMOIR

BY BEN GREENMAN

Dear Ms. Winfrey: I am a great admirer of your show, and, while I do not watch every day, when I do watch I am always touched in or near my heart. Recently, I was watching "Best Life Week," in which your guests discussed the challenges that they have overcome, and it occurred to me that the events of my early life, which are the subject of an upcoming book I have just completed, might be perfect for a future episode. I do not expect you to read the entire book, but I wanted to take a moment to review some of the highlights—though "highlights" is a crass, commercial word for such a wrenching memoir.

I was born in Chicago in 1969. Shortly afterward, in 1941, my entire family was rounded up by the authorities and sent to the Theresienstadt camp, along with tens of thousands of other Jews, who hailed principally from Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Germany. The first few days there, separated from my family, denied even the most basic creature comforts, I was in a state of shock. I could hardly eat or sleep, and, to make matters worse, I had misplaced my cell-phone charger. I felt powerless. (This would not be the first time that a metaphor appeared in time to help make sense of a difficult situation.) I spoke about the charger to everyone. Few understood my plight. Then I met a young woman named Amalie. She was deathly ill, but I could tell from her eyes that she was kind, and the next week my appraisal was confirmed when she handed me a package wrapped in burlap. It was a cell-phone charger, and, though it was completely the wrong kind—flat end, not round, which I was pretty sure I had mentioned to her—it taught me that there was a much more important power source: the human heart. (I trust my publisher implicitly, but I think this might be a good title for the book: "The Most Important Power Source." There

may also be some kind of pun with "bars," which represent the camp's prison bars, on the one hand, and cell-phone signal strength, on the other. "Bars You Can Walk Through"? If either of these would increase the likelihood that you might pick my book for your Book Club, please let me know.)

Amalie recovered from her illness. We became friends and then lovers, and after only a few months I asked her to marry me. We staged a secret ceremony, devising rings out of strips cut from our blankets. A week of bliss followed, but at the conclusion of that week, when I went to see her at our usual meeting place, there was an old woman there instead. "Have you become an old woman?" I cried in horror. The old woman told me that Amalie, my Amalie, had been taken away, possibly to Auschwitz. I cried. I cursed the heavens. I considered ending my life by looping the cord from the cell-phone charger over a rafter. But I persevered. Years later, after I escaped to London and then to Boston, Amalie ended up living down the street, married to a friend of mine, and we resumed our love affair. (This is yet another possible title for my memoir: "Back-Door Man.")

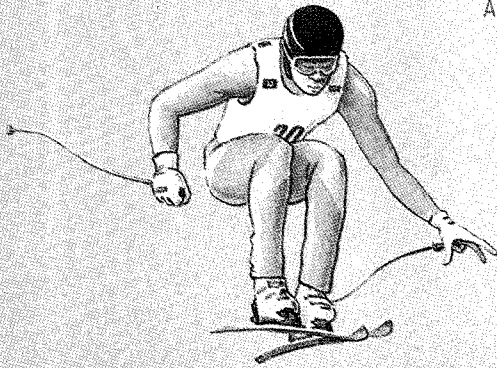
My love for Amalie, set against this backdrop of suffering, would be enough to make for a wonderful memoir. It would tie strings to the heart and then tug on them. But there is more to this incredible tale than just love. Shortly after Amalie left for what I thought was forever, I struck up a friendship with a young man at the camp. His name was Terry Bradshaw. Bradshaw was years away from the career that would bring him fame and glory in professional American football, but his charisma was apparent from the first, as was his athletic skill. There was a ragged baseball that one of the kinder guards had given us, and we used to play catch out in the yard. Bradshaw was not Jewish, but his

parents were Romany, or Gypsies, a heritage held in equal disdain by the Nazis. "Sometimes I wish I was never born," he said, zipping a fastball into the glove I had fashioned from a pillow and some tape. Such human drama!

Bradshaw also had a strong sense of justice. One day, we were playing cards when he suddenly slammed his fist on the table. "This isn't fair!" he exclaimed. I was cheating, and was worried that he had found me out, but he was speaking more broadly. He felt that the entire concentration camp was not fair, and I admired his clarity. He devised a plan of escape so fiendishly ingenious that I could hardly believe my eyes (when I saw it diagrammed on a piece of paper) or ears (when he turned it right side up and explained it to me). One morning a few weeks later, we were ready to go. He jogged out into the yard with his baseball. "Hey, Fritz," he said to the guard. "Heads up!" He zinged the baseball at the guard with a fearsome velocity and accuracy, bouncing it cleanly off the man's head and knocking him cold. It then caromed and dropped another guard, and a third after that, and, when it finally rolled to a halt, it served as a distraction for the vicious guard dog, who went immediately to fetch it. "Good boy," Bradshaw said. "Get keys." The dog, which seemed to understand English, trotted off and returned with a ring, which held keys to the guard's brand-new Leichter Panzerspähwagen. Bradshaw and I hopped in and drove west. I remember it as if it were yesterday: the Rolling Stones' "I'm Free" was playing on the radio, and we drove until the song was true.

These are the rough outlines of my story, but there are plenty of other details that are sure to entrance and bewitch the average reader—the time I played second base for the Yankees, the time aliens landed in front of the Panzerspähwagen and tried to abduct (and presumably probe) Bradshaw—not to mention film and television executives looking for heartwarming stories of human will and undying love. I know that your lawyers are paid to be suspicious, and I understand. But I can assure you that Terry Bradshaw is a Gypsy. I look forward to your thoughts on "Back-Door Man," and what is sure to be a fruitful creative partnership. ♦

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MATERNITY DEPT.

BABY FOOD

If breast is best, why are women bottling their milk?

BY JILL LEPORE

There are some new rules governing what used to be called “mother’s milk,” or “breast milk,” including one about what to call it when it’s no longer in a mother’s breast. A term, then, nomenclatural: “expressed human milk” is milk that has been pressed, squeezed, or sucked out of a woman’s breast by hand or by machine and stored in a bottle or, for freezing, in a plastic bag secured with a twist tie. Matters, regulatory: Can a woman carry containers of her own milk on an airplane? Before the summer of 2007, not more than three ounces, because the Transportation Security Administration classed human milk with shampoo, toothpaste, and Gatorade, until a Minneapolis woman heading home after a business trip was reduced to tears when a security guard at LaGuardia poured a two-day supply of her milk into a garbage bin. Dr. Ruth Lawrence, of the breast-feeding committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics, promptly told the press, “She needs every drop of that precious golden fluid for her baby”; lactivists, who often stage “nurse-ins,” sent petitions; and the T.S.A. eventually reclassified human milk as “liquid medication.” Can a woman sell her milk on eBay? It has been done, and, so far, with no more consequence than the opprobrium of the blogosphere, at least until the F.D.A. decides to tackle this one. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, however, does provide a fact sheet on “What to Do If an Infant or Child Is Mistakenly Fed Another Woman’s Expressed Breast Milk,” which can happen at day-care centers where fridges are full of bags of milk, labelled in smudgeable ink. (The C.D.C. advises that a switch “should be treated just as if an accidental exposure to other bodily fluids had occurred.”) During a nine-hour exam, can a woman take a break to express the milk uncomfortably filling her breasts? No, because the Americans with Disabilities Act does not consider lactation to be a disability. Can a human-milk bank pay

a woman for her milk? (Milk banks provide hospitals with pasteurized human milk.) No, because doing so would violate the ethical standards of the Human Milk Banking Association of North America. If a nursing woman drinks to excess—some alcohol flows from the bloodstream into the mammary glands—can she be charged with child abuse? Hasn’t happened yet, but there’s been talk. Meanwhile, women who are worried can test a few drops with a product called milk-screen; if the alcohol level is too high, you’re supposed to wait and test again, but the temptation is: pump and dump.

An observation, historical: all this is so new that people are making up the rules as they go along. Before the nineteen-nineties, electric breast pumps, sophisticated pieces of medical equipment, were generally available only in hospitals, where they are used to express milk from women with inverted nipples and from mothers of infants too weak and tiny to suck. Today, breast pumps are such a ubiquitous personal accessory that they’re more like cell phones than like catheters. Last July, Stephen Colbert hooked up to a breast pump on “The Colbert Report.” In August, the Republican Vice-Presidential nominee, Sarah Palin, told *People* that she has often found herself having to “put down the BlackBerries and pick up the breast pump.” Pumps, in short, abound.

A treatise, mercantile: Medela, a Swiss company that has long been a breast-pump industry leader, introduced its first non-hospital, electric-powered, vacuum-operated breast pump in the United States in 1991; five years later it launched the swank Pump In Style. Since then, its sales have quadrupled. The traffic in pumps is brisk, although accurate sales figures are hard to come by, not least because many people buy the top-of-the-line models second-hand. (Manufacturers argue that if you wouldn’t buy a used toothbrush you

LEFT: SOUTHWORTH & HAWES/COURTESY BUHL COLLECTION; RIGHT: ADVERTISING ARCHIVES

shouldn't buy a used breast pump, but a toothbrush doesn't cost three hundred dollars.) Then, there's the swag. "Baby-friendly" maternity wards that used to send new mothers home with free samples of infant formula now give out manual pumps: plastic, one-breast-at-a-time gizmos that work like a cross between a straw and a bicycle pump. Wal-

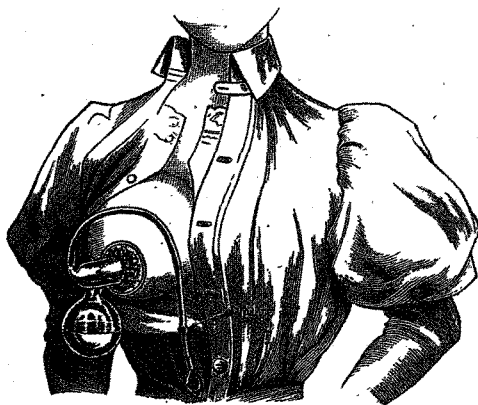
shields. (The shield is the plastic part of the contraption that fits over the breast; it looks like a horn of plenty.) Medela's no-hands model can be powered by your car's cigarette lighter. Strenuous motherhood is de rigueur. Duck into the ladies' room at a conference of, say, professors and chances are you'll find a flock of women with matching "brief-

are home with their babies all day long express their milk and feed it in a bottle. Behind closed doors, the nation begins to look like a giant human dairy farm.

This makes it all the more worrying that the evolving rules governing human milk, including the proposed Breast-feeding Promotion Act of 2007, look a muddle. They indulge in a nomencla-



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In Writing to Advertisers, Mention Medical Brief.

Mid-nineteenth-century America was gripped by a cult of motherhood. Then, a few decades later, many women refused to nurse.

Mart sells an Evenflo electric pump for less than forty dollars. Philips makes one "featuring new iQ Technology"; the pitch is: the pump's memory chip makes it smart, but the name also plays on dubious claims that human milk raises I.Q. scores. State-of-the-art pumps whose motors, tubes, and freeze packs are wedged into bags disguised to look like black leather Fendi briefcases and Gucci backpacks are a must-have at baby showers; the Medela Pump In Style Advanced Metro model—"the C.E.O. of breast pumps"—costs \$329.99 at Target. Medela also sells Pump & Save storage bags and breast

cases," waiting, none too patiently and, trust me, more than a little sheepishly, for a turn with the electric outlet. Pumps come with plastic sleeves, like the sleeves in a man's wallet, into which a mother is supposed to slip a photograph of her baby, because, Pavlov-like, looking at the picture aids "let-down," the release of milk normally triggered by the presence of the baby, its touch, its cry. Staring at that picture when your baby is miles away, well, it can make you cry, too. Pumping is no fun—whether it's more boring or more lonesome I find hard to say—but it has recently become so common that even some women who

tural sleight of hand, conflating "breast-feeding" and "feeding human milk." They are purblind, unwilling to eye whether it's his mother or her milk that matters more to a baby. They suffer from a category error. Is human milk an elixir, a commodity, a right? The question is, at heart, taxonomical. And it has been asked before.

In 1735, when the Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus first sorted out the animal kingdom, he classed humans in a category called *Quadrupedia*: four-footed beasts. Even those of Linnaeus's contemporaries who conceded the ani-



"I'm sorry, ladies, was this man bothering you?"

mality of man averred that people have two feet, not four. Ah, but hands are just feet that can grip, Linnaeus countered. This proved unpersuasive. By 1758, in a process that the Stanford historian of science Londa Schiebinger has reconstructed, Linnaeus had abandoned *Quadrupedia* in favor of a word that he made up, *Mammalia*: animals with milk-producing nipples. (The Latin root, *mamma*, meaning breast, teat, or udder, is closely related to the onomatopoeic *mama*—"mother"—thought to derive from the sound that a baby makes while suckling.) As categories go, "mammal" is an improvement over "quadruped," especially if you're thinking about what we have in common with whales. But, for a while, at least, it was deemed scandalously erotic. (Linnaeus's classification of plants based on their reproductive organs, stamens and pistils, fell prey to a similar attack. "Loathsome harlotry," one botanist called it.) More important, the name falls something short of capacious: only female mammals lactate; males, strictly speaking, are not mammals. Plenty of

other features distinguish mammals from Linnaeus's five other animal classes—birds, amphibians, fish, insects, and worms. (*Tetracoilia*, animals with a four-chambered heart, proposed by a contemporary of Linnaeus's, the Scottish surgeon John Hunter, was at least as good an idea.) Linnaeus had his reasons. Naysayers might doubt that humans are essentially four-footed (whether on scriptural or arithmetic grounds), but no man born of woman, he figured, would dare deny that he was nourished by mother's milk.

Then, too, while Linnaeus was revising his "Systema Naturae" from the twelve-page pamphlet that he published in 1735 to the two-thousand-page opus of 1758—and abandoning *Quadrupedia* in favor of *Mammalia*—his wife was, not irrelevantly, lactating. Between 1741 and 1757, she bore and nursed seven children. Her husband, meanwhile, lectured and campaigned against the widespread custom of wet-nursing. The practice is ancient; contracts for wet nurses have been found on scrolls in Babylonia. A very small number of

women can't breast-feed, and wet nurses also save the lives of infants whose mothers die in childbirth. But, in Linnaeus's time, extraordinary numbers of European mothers—as many as ninety per cent of Parisian women—refused to breast-feed their babies and hired servants to do the work. In 1752, Linnaeus wrote a treatise entitled "Step Nurse," declaring wet-nursing a crime against nature. Even the fiercest beasts nurse their young, with the utmost tenderness; surely women who resisted their mammalian destiny were to be ranked as lowlier than the lowliest brute.

Enlightenment doctors, philosophers, and legislators agreed: women should nurse their children. In "Émile" (1762), Rousseau prophesied, "When mothers deign to nurse their own children, then morals will reform themselves." (Voltaire had a quibble or two about Rousseau's own morals: the author of "Émile" had abandoned his five illegitimate children at birth, depositing them at a foundling hospital.) "There is no nurse like a mother," Benjamin Franklin wrote in 1785, after discovering an infant-mortality rate of eighty-five per cent at the foundling hospital in Paris that relied on wet nurses (the hospital where Rousseau's children all but certainly died), a discovery that explains why Franklin, in his autobiography, went to the trouble of remarking of his own mother, "She suckled all her 10 Children." But wet nurses were not nearly as common in Colonial America as they were in eighteenth-century Europe. "Suckle your Infant your Self if you can," Cotton Mather commanded from the pulpit. Puritans found milk divine: even the Good Book gave suck. "Spiritual Milk for Boston Babes, Drawn Out of the Breasts of Both Testaments" was the title of a popular catechism. By the end of the eighteenth century, breast-feeding had come to seem an act of citizenship. Mary Wollstonecraft, in her "Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792), scoffed that a mother who "neither suckles nor educates her children, scarcely deserves the name of a wife, and has no right to that of a citizen." The following year, the French National Convention ruled that women who employed wet nurses could not apply for state aid; not long afterward,

Prussia made breast-feeding a legal requirement.

There was also a soppy side to the Age of Reason. In 1794, Erasmus Darwin offered in "Zoonomia; or The Laws of Organic Life" a good summary of the eighteenth century's passionate attitude toward the milky breast:

When the babe, soon after it is born into this cold world, is applied to its mother's bosom; its sense of perceiving warmth is first agreeably affected; next its sense of smell is delighted with the odour of her milk; then its taste is gratified by the flavour of it; afterwards the appetites of hunger and of thirst afford pleasure by the possession of their objects, and by the subsequent digestion of the aliment; and, lastly, the sense of touch is delighted by the softness and smoothness of the milky fountain, the source of such variety and happiness.

A half century later, across the Atlantic, this kind of thing had turned into a cult of motherhood, abundantly illustrated in daguerreotypes from the eighteen-fifties that showed babies suckling beneath the unbuttoned bodices of prim, sober American matrons, looking half Emily Dickinson, half Leonardo's "Madonna and Child."

Then, bizarrely, American women ran out of milk. "Every physician is becoming convinced that the number of mothers able to nurse their own children is decreasing," one doctor wrote in 1887. Another reported that there was "something wrong with the mammary glands of the mothers in this country." It is no mere coincidence that this happened just when the first artificial infant foods were becoming commercially available. Cows were proclaimed the new "wet nurse for the human race," as the historian Adrienne Berney has pointed out in a study of the "maternal breast." Tragically, many babies fed on modified cow's milk died. But blaming those deaths on a nefarious alliance of doctors and infant-food manufacturers, as has become commonplace, seems both unfair and unduly influenced by later twentieth-century scandals (most infamously, Nestlé's deadly peddling of infant formula in Africa and elsewhere, which led, in 1981, to the landmark International Code for Marketing Breast-milk Substitutes). In the United States, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century physicians, far from pressing formula on their patients, told women that they ought to breast-feed. Many

women, however, refused. They insisted that they lacked for milk, mammals no more.

In 1871, Erasmus Darwin's grandson Charles published "Descent of Man," in which he speculated that the anomalous occurrence in humans of extra nipples represented a reversion to an earlier stage of evolution. If our ancestors once suckled litters of four or six, and if—as was supposed—men had nipples because male mammals once produced milk, maybe women, too, were evolving out of the whole business. In 1904, one Chicago pediatrician argued that "the nursing function is destined gradually to disappear." Gilded Age American women were so refined, so civilized, so delicate. How could they suckle like a barnyard animal? (By the turn of the century, the cow's udder, or, more often, its head, had replaced the female human breast as the icon of milk.) Behind this question lay another: how could a white woman nurse a baby the way a black woman did? (Generations of black women, slave and free alike, not only nursed their own infants but also served as wet nurses to white babies.) Racial theorists ran microscopic tests of human milk: the whiter the mother, chemists claimed, the less nutritious her milk. On downy white breasts, rosy-red nipples had become all but vestigial. It was hardly surprising, then, that well-heeled women told their doctors that they had insufficient milk. By the nineteen-tens, a study of a thousand Boston women reported that ninety per cent of the poor mothers breast-fed, while only seventeen per cent of the wealthy mothers did. (Just about the opposite of the situation today.) Doctors, pointing out that evolution doesn't happen so fast, tried to persuade these Brahmins to breast-feed, but by then it was too late.

The American epidemic of lactation failure depended, too, on the evolving design of baby bottles: so sleek, so clean, so scientific, so modern. The first U.S. patent for a baby bottle was issued in 1841; the device, shaped like a breast, could be held close to a mother's chest, almost like a prosthetic. Year by year, bottles became less like breasts. The familial cylindrical bottle, called the Stork Nurser, dates from 1910 and is tied to the rise of the stork myth: milk comes from the milkman; babies come from storks. Perversely,

Freud's insistence that infants experience suckling as sexual pleasure proved a boon to stork-style repression, too: mothers, eager to keep infantile incestuous desire at arm's length, propped their babies up in high chairs and handed them bottles.

Meanwhile, more and more women were giving birth in hospitals, which meant that, for the first time in human history, infants born prematurely, or very small, had a chance of survival—if only there were enough milk and a way to get it into the belly of a baby that was too tiny to suck at the breast.

In 1910, a Boston doctor, Fritz Talbot, spent three days searching for a wet nurse. He failed. Exasperated, Talbot established a placement service, the Boston Wet Nurse Directory. Across town, Francis Parkman Denny, caring for a sick baby, asked a neighbor to hand-express her milk for him. When the infant improved after drinking just three ounces, Denny, a bacteriologist, became convinced of the "bactericidal power" of human milk. The year after Talbot started his Wet Nurse Directory, Denny opened the first human-milk bank in the United States, collecting milk from donors using a breast pump whose design was inspired by bovine milking machines. (Milking machines are still cited in breast-pump patents; mechanically, Medela's Pump In Style has much in common with Dairy-Master's Swiftflo.) Denny's plan worked better: families who needed and could afford human milk did not generally like having poor women live with them; they preferred to have the milk delivered in bottles. Talbot stopped placing wet nurses and instead began distributing their milk; he renamed his agency the Directory of Mother's Milk.

Once milk banks replaced wet nurses, human milk came to be treated, more and more, as a medicine, something to be prescribed and researched, tested and measured in flasks and beakers. Denny's bottled, epidemiological model prevailed. Laboratory-made formulas improved, and aggressive marketing of processed infant food—not just bottles of formula but jars of mush and all manner of needless pap—grew to something between badgering and downright coercion. By the middle of the twentieth century, the majority of American women were feeding their babies for-

mula. But, all the while, Erasmus Darwin's rhapsodic view of the milky breast endured. "With his small head pillowed against your breast and your milk warming his insides, your baby knows a special closeness to you," advised "The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding," originally published by La Leche League in 1958, just two years after the league's first meeting. "He is gaining a firm foundation in an important area of life—he is learning about love." In the nineteen-sixties, nursing as a mammalian love-in began making a comeback, at least among wealthier women. (A brief history of food: when the rich eat white bread and buy formula, the poor eat brown bread and breast-feed; then they trade places.) In the decades since, the womanly art of breast-feeding has yielded, slowly but surely, to the medical science of human milk.

In 1997, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a policy statement on "Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk," declaring human milk to be "species-specific" and recommending it as the exclusive food for the first six months of a baby's life, to be followed by a mixed diet of solid foods and human milk until at least the end of the first year. In that statement, and in a subsequent revision, the A.A.P. cited research linking breast-feeding to the reduced incidence and severity of, among other things, bacterial meningitis, diarrhea, respiratory-tract infection, ear infection, urinary-tract infection, sudden-infant-death syndrome, diabetes mellitus, lymphoma, leukemia, Hodgkin's disease, obesity, and asthma. The benefits of breast-feeding are unrivalled; breast-feeding rates in the United States are low; the combination makes for a public-health dilemma. In 2000, the Department of Health and Human Services announced its goal of increasing the proportion of mothers who breast-feed their babies "at initiation" (i.e., before they leave the hospital) from a 1998 baseline of sixty-four per cent to a 2010 target of seventy-five per cent; until the age of six months, from twenty-nine per cent to fifty per cent; at one year, from sixteen per cent to twenty-five per cent. (The same targets were announced in 1990; they were not reached.) At-

tempts to improve initiation rates have met with much, if spotty, success. The Rush University Medical Center, in Chicago, which runs a peer-counselling program called the Mother's Milk Club, has achieved an astonishing initiation rate of ninety-five per cent; nationally, the rate is not quite seventy-five per cent. More difficult has been raising the rates at six and twelve months. The C.D.C., which issues an annual Breastfeeding Report Card, has announced that for babies born in 2005 the rate of exclusive breast-feeding at six months was only twelve per cent (although the rate of *some* breast-feeding at six months had risen to forty-three per cent).

One big reason so many women stop breast-feeding is that more than half of mothers of infants under six months old go to work. The 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act guarantees only twelve weeks of (unpaid) maternity leave and, in marked contrast to established practice in other industrial nations, neither the government nor the typical employer offers much more. To follow a doctor's orders, a woman who returns to work twelve weeks after childbirth has to find a way to feed her baby her own milk for another nine months. The nation suffers, in short, from a Human Milk Gap.

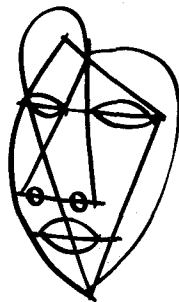
There are three ways to bridge that gap: longer maternity leaves, on-site infant child care, and pumps. Much effort has been spent implementing option No. 3, the cheap way out. Medela distributes pumps in more than ninety countries, but its biggest market, by far, is the United States, where maternity leaves are so stinting that many women—blue-, pink-, and white-collar alike—return to work just weeks after giving birth. (Breasts supply milk in response to demand; if a woman is unable to put her baby to her

breast regularly, she will stop producing milk regularly. Expressing not only provides milk to be stored for times when she is away; it also makes it possible for a working woman to keep nursing her baby at night and on weekends.) In 1998, Congress authorized states to use food-stamp funds granted to the U.S.D.A.'s Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

(WIC) to buy or rent breast pumps for eligible mothers. Breast-feeding rates rise with maternal age, education, and income. Medela offers a Corporate Lactation Program, free advice for employers seeking to reduce absenteeism and health-insurance costs by establishing "Mother's Rooms," equipped, ideally, with super-duper electric pumps, because "breastpumps with double-pumping options save time and can even help increase a mother's milk supply." The loss of productivity, Medela promises, is slight: "If each employee uses safe, effective, autocycling breastpumps, each visit to the Mother's Room should last no longer than 10 to 15 minutes."

Even more intensive has been the energy directed toward legislative reform. Many states have recently passed laws about breast-feeding, having to do with option No. 3. Must companies supply employees with refrigerators to store milk expressed during the workday? Twenty-one states, along with Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, require employers to make a "reasonable effort" to accommodate nursing mothers and their bottled milk, although these laws are, generally, toothless. As a rule, the posher the employer, the plusher the pump station. Traders at Goldman Sachs can use an online booking service to reserve time in dedicated lactation rooms, equipped with pumps and chairs; baristas at Starbucks are left to line up to use the customers' loo. In 2007, Oregon became the first state to pass a law requiring companies with more than twenty-five employees to provide "non-bathroom" lactation rooms. (A national media campaign asks, reasonably enough, if you wouldn't make your kid a sandwich in a public rest room, why would you expect a woman to bottle her baby's milk in one?) Virginia and Maryland recently joined twenty-three other states and the Virgin Islands in exempting women who expose their breasts while suckling infants from indecency laws. Whether pumping in public is obscene has not yet been tested—honestly, who would want to?—but, what with all these lactation rooms, maybe that won't come up.

More rules are under consideration. Can a woman or her employer get a tax break for producing or storing milk? Maryland exempts breast pumps from its sales tax, but a congressional sub-



committee is still mulling over the Breast-feeding Promotion Act. The goals of the bill are to add the word "lactation"—defined as "the feeding of a child directly from the breast or the expressing of milk from the breast"—to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and to allow a tax credit of up to ten thousand dollars per year to companies that provide their employees with pumps or pump rooms. A better title for the proposed legislation might be the Breast Pump Promotion Act.

The cynical politics of pump promotion would seem, at first, to be obvious. Breast pumps can be useful, even indispensable and, in some cases, lifesaving. But a thing doesn't have to be underhanded to feel cold-blooded. Non-bathroom lactation rooms are such a paltry substitute for maternity leave, you might think that the craze for pumps—especially pressing them on poor women while giving tax breaks to big businesses—would be met with skepticism in some quarters. Not so. The National Organization for Women wants more pumps at work: NOW's president, Kim Gandy, complains that "only one-third of mega-corporations provide a safe and private location for women to pump breast milk for their babies." (When did "women's rights" turn into "the right to work"?) The stark difference between employer-sponsored lactation programs and flesh-and-blood family life is difficult to overstate. Pumps put milk into bottles, even though many of breast-feeding's benefits to the baby, and all of its social and emotional benefits, come not from the liquid itself but from the smiling and cuddling (stuff that people who aren't breast-feeding can give babies, too). Breast-feeding involves cradling your baby; pumping involves cupping plastic shields on your breasts and watching your nipples squirt milk down a tube. But this truth isn't just rarely overstated; it's rarely stated at all. In 2004, when Playtex debuted a breast pump called the Embrace, no one bothered to point out that something you plug into a wall socket is a far cry from a whisper and a kiss. Rhode Island's Physicians' Committee for Breastfeeding gives an annual award for the most "Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace," a merit measured, in the main, by the comforts provided in pumping rooms, like the gold-medal winner's "soothing room," equipped with "a

sink, a lock on the door, and literature." It appears no longer within the realm of the imaginable that, instead of running water and a stack of magazines, "breastfeeding-friendly" could mean making it possible for women and their babies to be together. Some lactation rooms even make a point of banning infants and toddlers, lest mothers smuggle them in for a quick nip. At the University of Minnesota, staff with keys can pump their milk at the Expression Connection, but the sign on the door warns: "This room is not intended for mothers who need a space to nurse their babies."

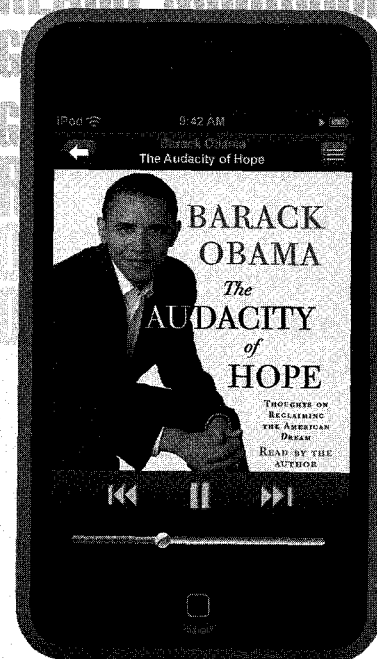
Lately, some WIC officers have begun to worry that pump promotion might be backfiring, having "the unintended effect of discouraging breastfeeding." But such cautions have hardly stopped the anti-formula fire and brimstone. Between 2004 and 2006, a National Breastfeeding Awareness Campaign included TV ads that likened a mother feeding her baby formula to a pregnant woman riding a mechanical bull: "You'd never take risks before your baby is born. Why start after?" No one seems especially worried about women whose risk assessment looks like this: "Should I take three twenty-minute pumping 'breaks' during my workday, or use formula and get home to my baby an hour earlier?"

Pumps can be handy; they're also a handy way to avoid privately agonizing and publicly unpalatable questions: is it the mother, or her milk, that matters more to the baby? Gadgets are one of the few ways to "promote breast-feeding" while avoiding harder—and divisive and more stubborn—social and economic issues. Is milk medicine? Is suckling love? Taxonomical questions are tricky. Meanwhile, *mamma ex machina*. Medela's newest models offer breakthrough "2-Phase Expression" technology: phase one "simulates the baby's initial rapid suckling to initiate faster milk flow"; phase two "simulates the baby's slower, deeper suckling for maximum milk flow in less time." These newest machines, the company promises, "work less like a pump and more like a baby." More like a baby? Holy cow. We are become our own wet nurses. ♦

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Jill Lepore takes readers' questions.

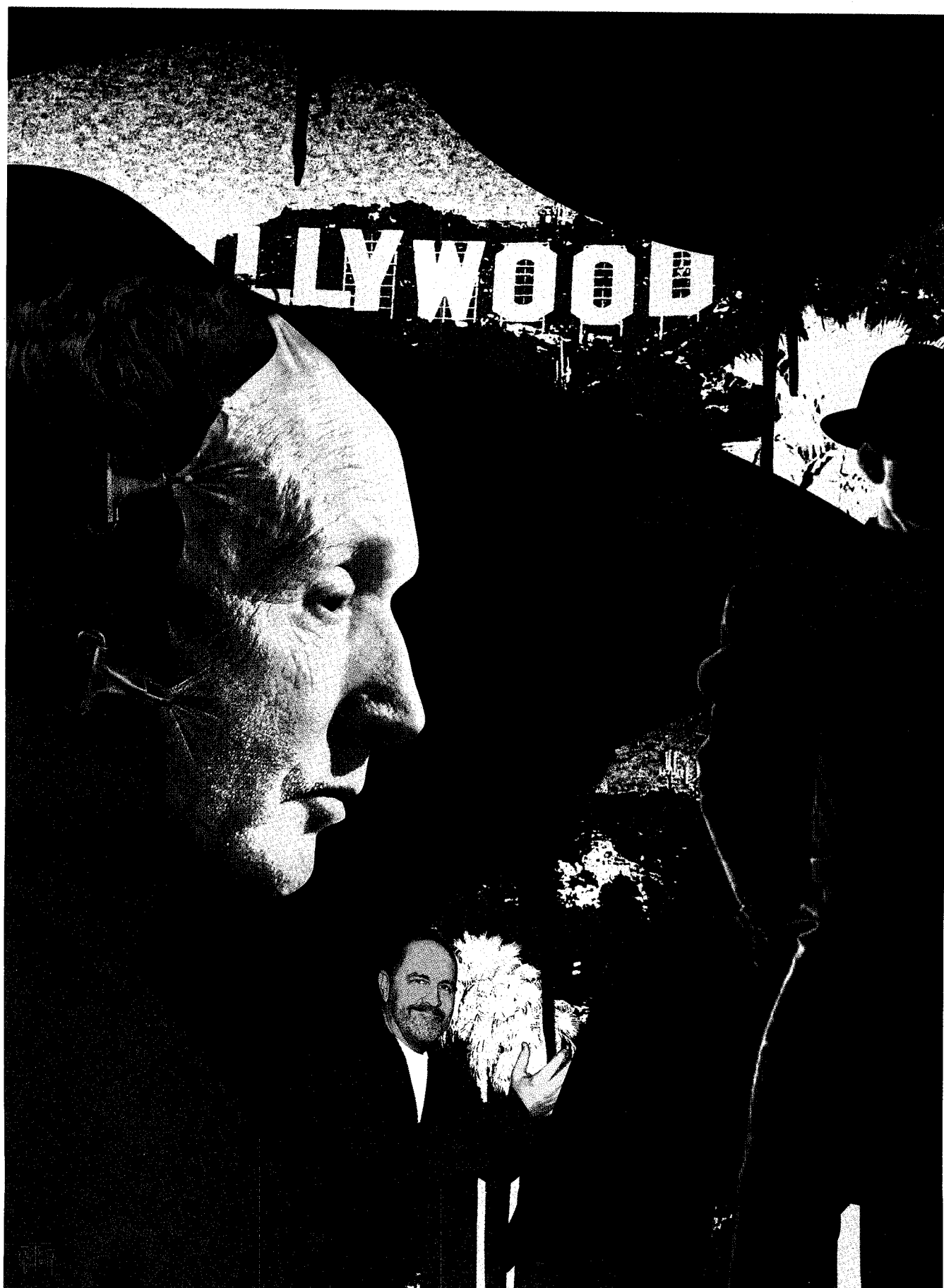
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Tim Palen wants his core audience to feel that a film is theirs, one marketer says: "He gives them content that feels bloggy and street."

THE COBRA

Inside a movie marketer's playbook.

BY TAD FRIEND

One night in mid-October, as the movie executive Tim Palen looked on with panoramic vigilance, a roar from jostling photographers seemed to freeze Josh Brolin's grin in place. Brolin plays George W. Bush in Oliver Stone's "W.," a Lionsgate film that was having its premiere, and he was making such halting progress down the red carpet outside Manhattan's Ziegfeld Theatre that he seemed to be still in character. Palen, who is Lionsgate's co-president of theatrical marketing—the studio's resident promotional genius—had been working for months to make people care about "W.," a film that didn't have an obvious audience; indeed, the film's subject, in the intense focus on the Presidential election and the economic crash, had all but disappeared. This evening would be a kind of sardonic resurrection: a few yards away on the red carpet, James Cromwell (who plays George H. W. Bush) was slyly telling an interviewer, "I play Dennis Kucinich," and Richard Dreyfuss (Dick Cheney) was posing in a green velvet jacket that made clear he was no Republican.

When Brolin spotted Palen, his fixed grin became a real smile. He mimed opening a magazine with an expression of amazement, then rushed over and gave the marketer a hug. Brolin and Oliver Stone had taped an appearance on "Charlie Rose" earlier that day, and Rose had surprised the actor with a photograph that showed him yawning, flamboyantly, across a full page of the latest *Newsweek*. Palen, an accomplished photographer, had taken the picture in a session that also produced the film's posters. *Newsweek* ran a lengthy essay about "W.," which concluded that the film was, "surprisingly, more or less fair." This had been Oliver Stone's goal—and was now Tim Palen's problem. His job was not to encapsulate the film's artistry but, rather, to insist to a busy, jaded, and suspicious audience that "W." would really

stir them up. As Tom Ortenberg, Lionsgate's president of theatrical films, told me, he had said at a marketing meeting, "Who wants to see an evenhanded editorial think piece from *Oliver Stone*?"

Publicity is selling what you have: the film's stars and sometimes its director. Marketing, very often, is selling what you don't have; it's the art of the tease. A premiere lets the marketing and publicity teams join in a final effort to "eventize" a film, to move it to the top of the nation's long to-do list. Many premieres feel slack and dutiful, but this one had the fizz of a genuine event. Lionsgate, which, together with "W."s other investors, spent about three hundred thousand dollars on the debut—three times its usual outlay—later reckoned that coverage on "Entertainment Tonight" and "Access Hollywood" and in dozens of other outlets was worth more than a million dollars in advertising.

Palen, in silence, watched the parade of stars until Thandie Newton, the British actress who plays Condoleezza Rice, came by and he reached out to clasp her hand. "I'm such a groupie," Palen sheepishly acknowledged after Newton glided on. "I'm a fourteen-year-old girl. But having a girl's viewing habits"—he is devoted to "The Hills" and "Project Runway"—"actually comes in very handy."

Palen, who is forty-seven, has a shaved head, a graying beard, and the bulging, tattooed arms of a steamfitter. Usually he wears jeans and a hoodie, but this evening he was in a black Prada suit, a black Prada shirt, and black Prada shoes: his premiere outfit. His uncommon mixture of traits—he is warm, incisive, competitive, loyal, and catty—makes him fun to be around, even at premieres, where he often feels anxious and out of place. When Michael Pitt, an actor who was in "Hedwig and the Angry Inch," ambled past in a ratty military jacket, Palen said, "I see *he* got dressed up. Headache and the Angry Itch."

You have to have some of that spit-baller's attitude to do Palen's job; you have to love a ruckus. Even as movie attendance has dropped nineteen per cent from its peak of 1.6 billion theatregoers, in 2002, the number of films released each year since then has increased by thirty per cent. A dozen new films—three of them big studio releases—now vie for attention on any given weekend. To cut through the ambient noise, major studios spend an average of thirty-six million dollars to market one of their films. "Most of a movie's opening gross is about marketing," Clint Culpepper, the president of Sony Screen Gems, says. "You can have the most terrific movie in the world, and if you can't convey that fact in fifteen- and thirty-second TV ads it's like having bad speakers on a great stereo." At Sony, executives ask, "Can we make this seem 'babysitter-worthy'? Will it get them out of the house?"

Lionsgate, smaller, scrappier, and stingier than the six major studios, has released such distinguished films as "Crash," "Monster's Ball," and "Away from Her," but it has made its reputation with edgy, low-budget action and horror movies, particularly the five "Saw" films. In August, the company opened a new production division to make a broader range of films, including romantic comedies. The studio has also declared itself willing to make an occasional big-budget "tent pole"; it has cautiously begun to take on the big studios.

These changes will place a greater burden on Palen, not so much of additional work—the line in Lionsgate's marketing division is that every job already includes "D.F.E.," or "Do Fucking Everything"—as of adapting his sensibility to new audiences, and of curbing his instinct, usually couched behind a restless politeness, that he knows best. Many Hollywood marketers construct their campaigns in slow-motion groupthink; Palen strikes so quickly that one of his regular poster vendors calls him "the Cobra." He believes that if you express

a strong opinion, fast, others will fall in line. But he also has a pitiless eye. At another Lionsgate premiere, for "Saw V," in Las Vegas, he glanced at the romantic-kiss photo on the Paris Hotel's marquee and remarked, "I don't like that fingernail." It became impossible to look at the marquee and see anything but the woman's lurid white-tipped nail against the man's neck, glowing like the evidence of a murder.

Palen's campaigns, which have won many of the movie industry's Key Art and Golden Trailer awards, are witty and pugnacious, particularly the ones that are borderline pornographic. For the gory 2006 hit "Hostel," Palen created a poster from his own photo of a giant chainsaw springing out of a nearly naked man's lap. For his "Rambo" poster, last year, Palen chose a dripping stencil of Sylvester Stallone's face which called to mind the famous Che Guevara image. "A lot of people wouldn't have had the nerve to do a piece of street art that subliminally sampled the Che poster," Stallone told me. "Studios usually crowd everything in, hoping to reach you with something—I've had posters with nine overlapping images. But Tim's was a piece of art."

Paul Haggis, the writer-director of the 2005 film "Crash," says, "I came in thinking Tim was doing everything wrong. He made the poster Michael Peña screaming over his daughter, rather than selling Brendan Fraser or Matt Dillon or Sandra Bullock. I worried that the trailer, a mood piece about how people have to crash into each other to feel alive, was going to seem like overly significant claptrap. Then Tim and Sarah"—Sarah Greenberg, Palen's co-president, who handles publicity—"came to me and said, 'We're going to go for an Academy campaign.' I really, really thought they were crazy: this was a little six-million-dollar film." For the cost of three full-page ads in the *Times*, about two hundred thousand dollars, Lionsgate sent more than a hundred thousand DVDs of the film to every member of the Screen Actors Guild—pioneering a now common saturation technique. In a huge upset, "Crash" beat "Brokeback Mountain" and "Munich" to win Best Picture.

"W." an earnest drama that punctuates George Bush's struggle to emerge from his father's shadow with satiric sequences set in the Situation Room, was rejected by several of the larger

studios before Lionsgate agreed to make it. "We took 'W.' because of Oliver Stone, pedigree, and built-in controversy—controversy leads to marketing," Michael Burns, Lionsgate's vice-chairman, told me. Palen said, "I don't know if everyone here loved the concept of 'W.," but we felt we could kick some ass on it."

Stone, in an early meeting to discuss the film's marketing, told Palen, "I know you're good with 'Saw,' but this isn't 'Saw.'"

Palen replied, "It's also not 'Crash,' and it's not '3:10 to Yuma'"—two of the studio's hits. "It's its own movie, and we'll treat it as such."

Marketers and filmmakers are often quietly at war. "The most common comment you hear from filmmakers after we've done our work is 'This is not my movie,'" Terry Press, a consultant who used to run marketing at DreamWorks SKG, says. "I'd always say, 'You're right—this is the movie America wants to see.'"

To reengage moviegoers with a dormant President, Palen spent twenty-three million dollars trying to tie the film to the long-awaited end of Bush's term and to tap the same appetite for political ridicule that feasted on Tina Fey's impersonations of

EH?

Eh he said and she dreamed eh. It was like that between them.

Not that his lips dreamed, not that his dreamed lips parted. Eh he'd say

and her dream was eh, was all eh, all and only. Sometimes

a near kiss an almost tide drawn back withdrawn withdrawing. Sometimes the hackled wave

raised, drew back its lip, sheered its teeth, coughed its raw guttural. Or

she herself voicing involuntary *eh* his whatever, his

Sarah Palin. Most of the movie's trailers and TV spots were in the rollicking spirit of Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11," which the studio also distributed: they featured Bush driving drunk, mouthing malapropisms, and looking confounded. At the close, Palen wanted to run a new banner ad on Internet ticketing sites and political blogs: "Sitting President," a photo that he'd taken of Brodin as Bush on the toilet, posed like Rodin's "The Thinker." Stone vetoed it: he was concerned that Palen's materials made his film seem giddy and trifling. "Josh on the toilet, that one I didn't go for," the director told me.

"I sympathize," Palen told me. "Oliver Stone has the President taking a shit—how disrespectful. But from the marketing perspective we needed some *teeth*. Moritz Borman"—one of the film's producers—"told me, 'I don't want to know about "Sitting President," and if Oliver finds out and yells, I'm going to yell at you, too. But you have to do it.'" So Palen did. And Stone didn't find out. (Borman says that he didn't authorize the ad.)

Yet a number of Hollywood observers believed that no amount of marketing could save "W." from being a "feathered fish"—a film whose target audience thinks

what-it-is. But
sometimes his naked eh
with her ah alongside—

the rocked hulls nudging nuzzling
or was it scraping what
did she care? Would his eh

oh? How fast she'd
founder, taking on water,
mouth emptying full.

By day she'd hear on the air
his syllable, turn
toward or away, does it

matter? If she said ah
would he dream ah? Oh—
not like that between them.

—*Nathalie Anderson*

it's for someone else. "They made the movie look like 'Animal House,' a Judd Apatow film, and that audience won't be going because they know it's about Bush and politics," one film-marketing consultant told me. "When the reviews reveal that it's shockingly fair, the 'Fahrenheit 9/11' crowd will stay away. And the people who like Bush are out once they hear it's Oliver Stone. I think the film opens at five million"—disaster.

When Palen saw Stone on the red carpet, the men smiled and tapped each other on the wrists. Then Stone mischievously stuck out his tongue. "These are the duties," Palen murmured as he watched the filmmaker move on. "We say 'Hey!'" In effect, Palen had now passed the baton back. His work in selling what the studio didn't quite have—a brisk, playful romp—would now begin to give way to what the movie really was. But not before the verdict on Palen's marketing became clear, three days later, when the film opened.

One afternoon in June of 2001, Andrew Fogelson, a longtime Hollywood executive who had run marketing divisions at Columbia and Warner Bros., was driving down Olympic Boulevard in

Santa Monica when he saw a billboard advertising "The Fast and the Furious," a forthcoming film about street racers. The billboard showed only a streaking yellow sports car. Recognizing it as a Universal Pictures film, Fogelson picked up his cell phone and called his son, Adam, then Universal's senior vice-president of creative marketing, at his office. "Adam," he said, "what the fuck is this car movie, and why would anyone go see a movie about hubcaps?"

"That's why I'm here, and you're on Olympic Boulevard," Adam Fogelson replied.

"What are you hoping for?" his father asked.

"Twenty million."

"Lifetime?"

"No, opening."

"If that opens at twenty million," Andrew Fogelson said, "I'll eat it." The picture opened at forty million. "My father saw a car, and not a particularly special car, at an angle on a billboard," Adam Fogelson, who now runs Universal's marketing department, says. "And he thought, How would that motivate? For us, that image was simply a graphic, readable reminder—an exclamation point—on a very expen-

sive campaign of trailers and TV ads that had already got our target audience excited. If you're my dad and you say, 'What the hell is that?,' it wasn't for you in the first place."

"In 1970, when I started," Andrew Fogelson told me, "marketing was called 'advertising and publicity,' and it was a totally unrefined art that consisted of making posters that tried to capture the essence of the movie and said 'Starts Tomorrow.'"

The business began to change in 1973, when "Billy Jack," about a rebellious ex-Green Beret, was reissued by its writer and star, Tom Laughlin, after a Warner Bros. release fizzled. Laughlin's company, Taylor-Laughlin Distribution, saturated the airwaves with television spots aimed at twelve different demographics—"carefully calculated overkill," as one Taylor-Laughlin executive put it. When the film grossed a then enormous seventy-five million dollars, the studios suddenly understood that television ads really work. And if you're going to spend a lot of money on advertising, they realized, you need to be in more theatres to amortize the cost. "Jaws" opened "wide" in 1975, on four hundred and nine screens, at the time a large number; big studio films now open everywhere on more than four thousand. And if you're in that many theatres you need huge audiences as soon as a film opens—so you need a movie that sells itself. And then you need to sell the hell out of it.

One of the oldest jokes in the business is that when a studio head takes over he's given three envelopes, the first of which contains the advice "Fire the head of marketing." Nowadays, though, former marketers, such as Oren Aviv, at Disney, and Marc Shmuger, at Universal, often run the studios. "Studios now are pimples on the ass of giant conglomerates," one studio's president of production says. "So at green-light meetings it's a bunch of marketing and sales guys giving you educated guesses about what a property might gross. No one is saying, 'This director was born to make this movie.'"

A studio film costs an average of a hundred and seven million dollars to make and sell, so merely having the germ of a brilliant movie is by no means enough to get a green light. The producer Brian Grazer, whose films include "Frost/Nixon" and "A Beautiful Mind," mentioned a potential remake of a James Dean film: "I have the book 'East of Eden' and

a script by Paul Attanasio”—an A-list screenwriter—“but I don’t know how I’d ever make it, because I don’t know how I’d sell it. With this material, I can’t reach you emotionally, tell the story, or be visually transcendent in a thirty-second TV spot. And there’s no ‘Holy shit!’ moment for the trailer.” (Grazer is continuing to develop the project, with a new writer.)

Marketing considerations shape not only the kind of films studios make but who’s in them—gone are lavish adult dramas with no stars, like the 1982 “Gandhi.” Such considerations account for a big role being written for Shia LaBeouf in the most recent “Indiana Jones” (to attract youthful viewers as well as Harrison Ford’s aging fans). They also account for the virtual absence from the screen of children between the ages of newborn (when they appear briefly, to puke on the star for the trailer) and that of the Macaulay Culkin character in “Home Alone.” Why have a four-year-old character, when one who is ten will prompt ten-year-olds to find him “relatable,” and four-to-nine-year-olds to look up to him? “If we weren’t making decisions based on marketability, John Malkovich would be in every movie,” a top studio marketer says. “Great actor, but not

someone you want to see half-naked in the sheets next to Angelina Jolie.”

Modern campaigns have three acts: a year or more before the film débuts, you introduce it with ninety-second teaser trailers and viral Internet “leaks” of gossip or early footage, in preparation for the main trailer, which appears four months before the release; five weeks before the film opens, you start saturating with a “flight” of thirty-second TV spots; and, at the end, you remind with fifteen-second spots, newspaper ads, and billboards. Studios typically spend about ten million dollars on the “basics” (cutting trailers and designing posters, conducting market research, flying the film’s talent to the junket and the premiere, and the premiere itself) and thirty million on the media buy. Between seventy and eighty per cent of that is spent on television advertising (enough so that viewers should see the ads an average of fifteen times), eight or nine per cent on Internet ads, and the remainder on newspaper and outdoor advertising. The hope is that a potential viewer will be prodded just enough to make him decide to see what all the fuss is about. It’s the “belt and suspenders and corset and parachute harness” approach.

“What I’m doing now is a totally different activity from what my father did,” Universal’s Adam Fogelson says. “We have to yell loud and long enough to perfectly inflate the balloon on the day of release—and yet not so loud that we pop it.”

It is often said in Hollywood that no one sets out to make a bad movie, but the truth is that people cheerfully set out to make bad movies all the time. It is more accurate to say that no one sets out to make a movie without having a particular audience in mind. Many studio executives argue that films can’t objectively be categorized as “good” or “bad”: either they appeal to a given demographic—and make the studio at least a ten-per-cent profit—or they don’t. “Most critics are not the target audience for most of the films being made today, so they’re not going to respond to them,” Sony Screen Gems’ Clint Culpepper says. “How a fifty-six-year-old man feels about a movie aimed at teen-age girls is irrelevant.”

An unexpected corollary of the modern marketing-and-distribution model is that films no longer have time to find their audience; that audience has to be identified and solicited well in advance. Marketers segment the audience in a variety of ways, but the most common form of partition is the four quadrants: men under twenty-five; older men; women under twenty-five; older women. A studio rarely makes a film that it doesn’t expect will succeed with at least two quadrants, and a film’s budget is usually directly related to the number of quadrants it is anticipated to reach. The most expensive tent-pole movies, such as the “Pirates of the Caribbean” franchise, are aimed at all four quadrants.

The collective wisdom is that young males like explosions, blood, cars flying through the air, pratfalls, poop jokes, “you’re so gay” banter, and sex—but not romance. Young women like friendship, pop music, fashion, sarcasm, sensitive boys who think with their hearts, and romance—but not sex (though they like to hear the naughty girl telling her friends about it). They go to horror films as much as young men, but they hate gore; you lure them by having the ingénue take her time walking down the dark hall.

Older women like feel-good films and Nicholas Sparks-style weepies: they are the core audience for stories of doomed



“I brought some work home with me.”

love and triumphs of the human spirit. They enjoy seeing an older woman having her pick of men; they hate seeing a child in danger. Particularly once they reach thirty, these women are the most "review-sensitive": a chorus of critical praise for a movie aimed at older women can increase the opening weekend's gross by five million dollars. In other words, older women are discriminating, which is why so few films are made for them.

Older men like darker films, classic genres such as Westerns and war movies, men protecting their homes, and men behaving like idiots. Older men are easy to please, particularly if a film stars Clint Eastwood and is about guys just like them, but they're hard to motivate. "Guys only get off their couches twice a year, to go to 'Wild Hogs' or '3:10 to Yuma,'" the marketing consultant Terry Press says. "If all you have is older males, it's time to take a pill."

Studio marketers have a few rules for making their films seem broadly "relatable":

Can't we all get along? In "Stomp the Yard," which was about an urban street dancer who goes to college, the poster showed the African-American hero with his back turned, leaving his race indeterminate. The campaign for "Bring It On" portrayed the story as a rivalry between white and black cheerleading squads, even though more than eighty per cent of the film was about the white squad. The first marketing materials for Fox's X-Men franchise showed only an "X." Why exclude half your audience?

If the poster shows a poster child, the movie is for kids. Posters are intended to tell you the film's genre at a glance, then make you look more closely. Horror posters, for instance, have dark backgrounds; comedies have white backgrounds with the title and copy line in red. Because stars are supposed to open the film, and because they have contractual approval of how they appear on the poster, the final image is often a so-called "big head" or "floating head" of the star. Every poster for a Will Smith movie features his head, and for good reason: he is the only true movie star left, the only one who could open even a film about beekeeping monks.

Everybody's a comedian. Any drama with at least three funny moments in it will be portrayed, in the trailer and TV

spots, as a comedy. The trailer for the 2005 film "The Squid and the Whale" conveyed a measure of the film's delicate unease, but it was basically a series of wry exchanges. A joke, particularly a pratfall, is self-contained, whereas a sad or anxious moment is hard to convey briefly and out of context.

If it's called "The Squid and the Whale," it's somebody else's problem. That movie was produced by Samuel Goldwyn Films, an independent studio, and grossed seven million dollars—quite good for a small film, but not for a studio release. If a movie's title and stars don't tell you almost everything you need to know about a film—"Get Smart," starring Steve Carell, say—marketers worry. Fox had to spend a little extra to sell "The Devil Wears Prada," because casual moviegoers wondered what Meryl Streep was doing in a horror film. When a movie underperforms, an awkward title is often seen as the culprit.

Always cheat death. People die in movies; they almost never die in trailers. They are courageous ("The Express") or missing ("Changeling") or profoundly alive ("Revolutionary Road"). "If a movie is completely, one hundred per cent about death, then it's also about life, right?" Fox's co-head of marketing, Tony Sella, told me. The only thing marketers can't pull off, Sella acknowledged, is "selling old to young"—persuading kids to see a movie like "Driving Miss Daisy." "You can try with"—he adopted a baritone voice-over—"You don't know where you're going, but here's what it's going to look like when you arrive." But they usually say, "Screw you, I'll wait."

Two days after the "W." premiere, Tim Palen and Sarah Greenberg were sitting in a theatre in Sherman Oaks, California, thumbing their BlackBerrys before a test screening for "Chilled in Miami," when they were visited by Paul Brooks, the film's producer. A romantic comedy starring Renée Zellweger, "Chilled in Miami" was to be released in late January. Zellweger plays an eager executive in a Miami-based conglomerate who flies to a small town in Minnesota to figure out whom to fire at the local plant. An earlier screening had had mixed results. "We made all the changes the last screening suggested," Brooks said, "so if the film tests for shit, it's NRG's fault."

(Nielsen NRG, which conducts test screenings, is one of Hollywood's leading research companies.)

Everyone smiled, a little carefully. Palen had explained the film to me earlier by saying, "Did you see 'Baby Boom'? It's that. It's that without the baby." He had been working to make a compelling trailer, using David Schneiderman, at Seismic Productions, who cut trailers for "The Devil Wears Prada" and "Sex and the City." Paul Brooks wanted the trailer to be primarily comedic, but Palen felt that it needed an emotional through-line, "the stuff that tugs on the ovary." Schneiderman says that Palen's reaction to his first pass "was the worst: 'Where's the Mary Tyler Moore?' He said, 'This girl goes to this little town in Minnesota and she's a cold person, and they warm her up, right? More warmth, more style, more "Devil Wears Prada." And I said, 'I don't know where that is in the movie.' And he said, 'Create it.'"

Palen often uses a jokey shorthand to convey the sort of campaign he wants; his internal name for "Chilled in Miami" was "The Devil Wears Patagonia." He referred to "Good Luck Chuck," a critically lambasted R-rated comedy starring Jessica Alba, as "There's Something About Jessica," and cut the TV spots to emphasize Alba's tumbles and mishaps. "We cheated it and got the film open, which was kind of a feat," he says. "America likes cheese." (When I e-mailed Palen to tell him that I'd watched the film, he replied, "Can you get workman's comp?")

Each maneuver and ad buy in Palen's campaigns is detailed in a confidential playbook. For marketers, much of the science of marketing is determining which old movie your new movie is most like, so you can turn to that movie's playbook as a rough guide. Much of the art of marketing is developing a campaign that reassures moviegoers that the new film is very similar to (or at least "from the director of") another one they liked. The top-ten-grossing movies of the last decade were all "pre-awareness" titles: movies like "Spider-Man" whose stories the audience already knew from another medium, or sequels. Familiarity breeds comfort until it suddenly breeds contempt. "Will Ferrell did great doing the same sports comedy over and over," a leading marketing

consultant observes. "And then 'Semi-Pro' was one movie too far. Unfortunately, you only learn that afterward."

The big studios' average marketing budget of thirty-six million dollars is one-third the total cost of making a film; Lionsgate's average marketing budget is twenty-two million dollars, about two-thirds of the film's total cost. In other words, Lionsgate is making much cheaper films that rely disproportionately on their marketing. "Fox probably spent fifteen million dollars more marketing 'Transporter 2' than Lionsgate spent marketing 'Transporter 3,'" one of the action-film franchise's producers, Steven Chasman, says. "But Lionsgate did just as good a job, because they take more care in lasering in on their targets." "Transporter 2" grossed forty-three million; "Transporter 3" grossed thirty-two million but—when DVD sales and other ancillary revenues are factored in—will ultimately net Lionsgate about ten million.

Thrifty campaigns epitomize the studio's abiding financial caution: it often sells off foreign rights and defrays production and marketing costs by teaming up with outside investors. As a result, Lionsgate, which has been in business for twelve years, has never lost more than ten million dollars on a film. (It has also built a thriving business producing such television shows as "Weeds" and "Mad Men.") But its biggest earners, "Monster's Ball" and the first "Saw" film, each netted a relatively modest forty to fifty million dollars, and its distribution deal for Tyler Perry's comic melodramas—sizable hits, all six of them—has made the studio only about a hundred and twenty million dollars in all. The larger studios can lose more than a hundred million dollars on a film fairly easily, yet their occasional tent-pole blockbusters can generate six hundred to eight hundred million dollars in profits. And tent poles spawn sequels that give the studio some assurance of profitability in years to come.

Lionsgate's vice-chairman, Michael Burns, acknowledges that the studio will have to refashion its marketing hooks as it begins fishing in bigger, murkier waters. "The wider the potential audience, the more difficult it is to find the comfort

zone for how we're going to market it," he says. "I think we can do well with 'Chilled,' but it's not in our historical sweet spot." Some at the studio worried that the film, while funny and pleasant, wasn't distinctive enough to establish Lionsgate as the new home of the "rom com." No one could quite agree on a title that would improve upon the gloomy "Chilled in Miami." And though some of Palen's favorite films are comedies about strong women—"Working Girl" and "The Women" (the 1939 version)—he had no playbook for a PG-13 romantic comedy about a strong woman.

After the October test screening, Joe Drake, the head of Lionsgate's motion-picture group, said to Palen and Greenberg, "Is it just me, or did that play really well in the room?" The scores seemed to bear Drake out: the percentage who thought the film excellent or very good, the so-called "top two boxes," went from sixty-five at the earlier screening to seventy-four—in other words, from worrisome to respectable. (Studios love to see scores in the eighties.)

Yet testing is fraught: it rewards comedy, narrative, and familiar stars or plot elements, and often undervalues the new. Executives' testing stories take divergent paths to the same punch line. Either they decided not to tamper with a "Pulp Fiction," despite testing results invariably described as "the lowest scores in the studio's history," or they were confounded when an "Akeelah and the Bee" faltered commercially despite "the highest scores in the studio's history." In

both scenarios, the numbers lied. "Testing is a sham," one marketing consultant says. "All you've learned is what people thought of a movie they didn't have to pay for. It does not mean they're going to go pay for it."

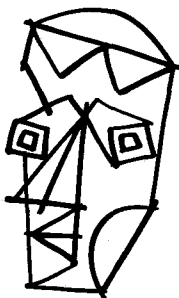
After the screening, Palen listened carefully to the focus group. Then, on the escalator down from the theatre, he said, "They weren't talking about Renée Zellweger, but she was the reason they came, because she's a movie star. So if we're out on Super Bowl weekend as counter-programming—trying to get women—the trailer has to be about her and be all shellacked and lacquered. Though I wonder if ' Fargo ' meets ' Baby Boom ' might be more relatable, with the

downsizing everyone's experiencing." I mentioned that Blanche (Siobhan Fallon Hogan), Zellweger's administrative assistant at the plant, had got many of the biggest laughs. "Droll and folksy reads as quaint, reads as art house," Palen said. "I love Blanche, but I can't sell her."

Like most comedies, "Chilled" lacked a huge trailer moment: the fabled five seconds that can open a film, such as the head of the Statue of Liberty bouncing down the street, in "Cloverfield." So its trailer would be a standard three-act journey: where the Zellweger character has been, the world she's in now, and where she's going—all in two and a half minutes. The voice-over star Don LaFontaine, who died in September, was revered for his ability to quickly situate the audience with such trademark phrases as "In a world where . . ." and "From the bedroom to the boardroom." Current trailers often achieve the same narrative shorthand with two-second establishing shots separated by dips to black accompanied by whooshes of sound. Of course, rapid cuts can create unease: what are they hiding? So a way to signal genuine quality is to "stop the trailer down" and let a scene play out for ten or fifteen seconds.

The marketing advantage that studios have over other industries is that they can give out free samples of a movie as advertising—promotional material that feels like content. But filmmakers object when a trailer reveals too much of the story, or their best fireball, or their funniest joke. Tony Sella, the Fox marketer, wanted to end his trailer for "The Simpsons Movie" with Homer walking his pet Spider-Pig upside down across the ceiling and singing his Spider-Pig song. "The writers told me, 'Absolutely not, you can't use it,'" Sella recalls. "I said, 'O.K., we can *not* use Spider-Pig, and the theatres will be three-quarters full, and the audience will be tremendously amused when they see it. Or you can have *lines around the block*, and half the people will be saying, 'Wait till you see Spider-Pig!' to the other half." Spider-Pig stayed in.

Another problem with free samples is: what if the product isn't particularly remarkable? "How many great movies are there each year?" the trailer cutter David Schneiderman says. "We're in the business of cheating, let's face it. We fix voice-overs, create dialogue to clear up a story, use stock footage. We give

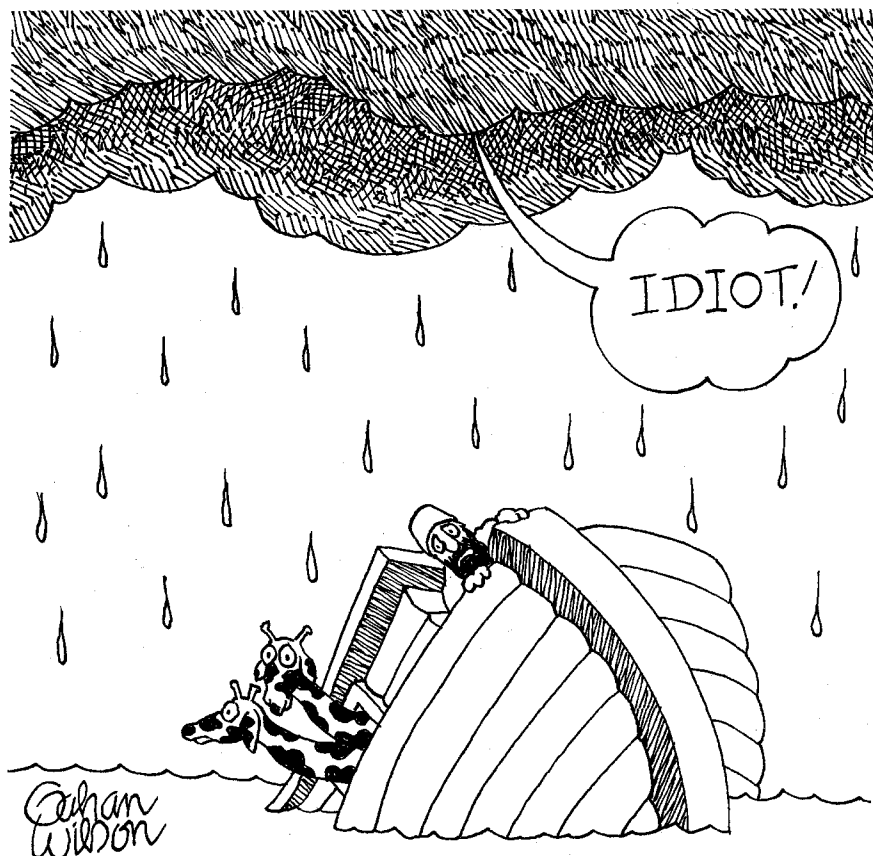


pushup bras to flat-chested girls, take people's eyes and put them where we want them. And sometimes it works."

Palen grew up in Northglenn, Colorado, not far from Boulder, where his father ran a Texaco station and his mother was an administrative assistant for a cheese manufacturer. He was the middle child in a churchgoing Catholic family, bracketed by two sets of sisters, all of whom ended up married and living within thirty miles of their parents. Palen knew by age five that he was attracted to boys and even before then that his future lay elsewhere. "I always felt like a fish out of water in northern Colorado," he says. "Uncle Jim had been Clark Gable's stunt double on 'The Misfits,' and I wanted to be on that plan—to get out."

He left college before graduating and wound up in Los Angeles, where he met his partner of the last twenty-one years, an entrepreneur named Abel Villareal, and began work as a marketer for Sony and then for Destination Films. He came to Lionsgate in 2001, and his first campaign there was for "Monster's Ball," which won Halle Berry an Oscar. But, like many marketers, he discovered that his skills are most needed on less accomplished films. The week after "W." opened, Lionsgate released "Saw V." The "Saw" series, refreshed every Halloween with an increasingly thin yet convoluted story line, would with this installment become the highest-grossing horror franchise ever. At its heart is a soft-voiced madman, Jigsaw, played by Tobin Bell, who kidnaps bad people and forces them to "play a game," according to the videotaped instructions of his Jigsaw doll, that usually ends in their messy dismemberment.

Palen has showcased the films' torture porn with inventive zeal, developing a "Saw" blood drive featuring S & M nurses, and putting a clip of one of the first film's head-smashing "traps" online, with the tagline "How Fucked Up Is That?" For "Saw IV," he slipped five-second "blink" ads into a pod of commercials on MTV: the screen filled with static, and then the creepy Jigsaw doll suddenly appeared, scaring the bejeezus out of viewers. "Tim recognized that you want the core audience to feel, for a while, that the film is theirs," John Shea, the head of integrated marketing at MTV Networks, says. "So he gives them content that feels bloggy and street—like they're



behind the curtain. Then they become barkers for your film."

Palen has always believed in being polarizing, always been willing to alienate much of the audience in order to motivate his core. Other studios thought, not without reason, that Lionsgate was sometimes flouting industry rules. For "Saw II," Palen made the "II" a pair of severed fingers, then released the poster without seeking the approval of the Motion Picture Association of America, which forbids ads that show "dismemberments, mutations, or mutilations of bodies," along with such objectionable elements as "people or animals on fire" and "sacrilege." (To qualify the film for an M.P.A.A. rating, Palen later recast the poster so you couldn't see the fingers' nubs.) "Horror posters are usually a girl with big boobs running from a guy with an axe, and Tim has a beautifully composed image of freaking severed fingers," Michael Kahane, who produces some of Palen's trailers and posters, says. "We all thought, How did he get away with that?"

"Saw V," buoyed by Palen's poster—a haunting image of a brooding man wearing the severed face of Tobin Bell, at-

tached by metal clips, atop his own—opened that weekend at thirty million dollars, bested only by Disney's "High School Musical 3." (Palen promptly took out ads on ticketing sites declaring "High School is for pussies.") Yet the quick-and-dirty series has constrained Lionsgate's reputation in the industry. Jeremy Zimmer, a board member at United Talent Agency, says, "You can't grow without spending real money on movies. Eventually, you have to look into the eyes of a relatively untested filmmaker like Zack Snyder and say, 'Fuck it, let's do it—let's make '300.'" You have to take the Big Gulp."

"We now have a rule, as a department, that we don't mention 'Saw' to other filmmakers," Palen told me. "It's self-aggrandizing, it minimizes the movie we're working together on now, and it makes us look old."

On October 17th, "W." opened on two thousand and thirty screens. Opening Fridays are always tense: at Fox, they used to call the long hours "the Vigil," and Universal's Adam Fogelson says that openings are "an exciting, nauseating thrill ride best enjoyed with a piña colada

far away." If a film doesn't find its audience the first weekend, exhibitors pull it from their best theatres, and eventual television-licensing fees and DVD sales fall correspondingly. Lionsgate's movie executives spent the day at their headquarters, a bland, red-brick building in Santa Monica, anxiously awaiting updates on the grosses. During the wait, Oliver Stone called to thank Palen for his work; Palen said that it was one of the nicest calls he'd ever received from a filmmaker. "I'm only disappointed Oliver never threw something at me," he added afterward. "I was hoping for that, almost, just to get to see a piece of the legend."

The reviews were generally pretty good, which always helps "prestige" films, but Lionsgate's hopes really rose when NRG's tracking for "W." jumped after the film's premiere. Marketers pay particular attention to how many people volunteer knowledge of their film—if the numbers are low a few weeks out, they will tweak the campaign—and "W."s "unaided awareness" had risen from two per cent that Monday to a healthy eight per cent on Thursday. The three main research companies use their tracking data to predict the opening weekend's gross, and their predictions for "W." were in the eight-to-nine-million-dollar range. These forecasts can be astonishingly accurate—or way off. Palen has found that the track-

ing for Lionsgate's hits routinely underestimates their audience: people who are slightly outside the mainstream. (At the studio, they call these party crashers "the freak factor.") NRG predicted that Tyler Perry's first film for Lionsgate, "Diary of a Mad Black Woman," would open at four to six million dollars, and it opened at \$21.9 million. Tracking studies are conducted among people who've seen at least six movies in the past year, but Perry's films have proved to be wildly popular with churchgoing African-American women. Other hidden pockets of interest made "The Passion of the Christ" and "Sex and the City" even bigger hits.

Kevin Goetz, president of the worldwide motion-picture group at the research firm OTX, says that his company, knowing it can't track all of Perry's audience, simply inflates the "unknown variable" segment of its predictive model by twenty to twenty-five per cent for his films. Often, then, the algorithm of box-office estimation, which is itself the algorithm of marketing efficacy, is actually the algorithm of the informed hunch.

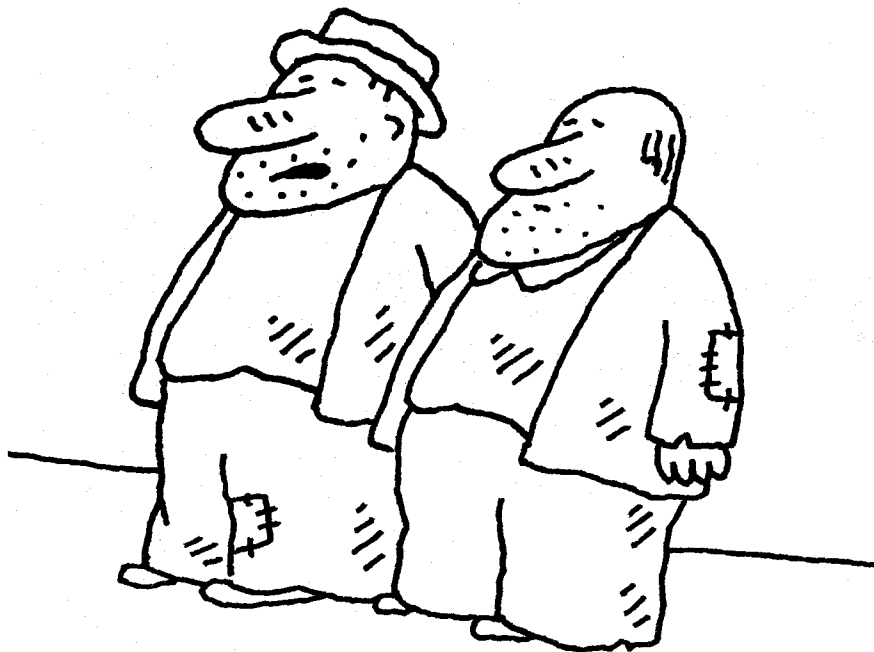
At 5:30 P.M. Friday, Lionsgate's distribution department sent an e-mail estimating that, based on strong early attendance in the East, "W." would open at about twelve million dollars. Palen hates to make box-office predictions, but at the end of the afternoon he murmured, "If the

number doesn't have a 'teen' in it, I'll be disappointed." On Saturday, he e-mailed me to say that he hoped the film would stay in second place, behind "Max Payne," so "I can break out the Bush on the toilet for next week with a huge 'WE'RE NUMBER TWO!' message (kidding . . . sorta)." When the film wound up a close fourth for the weekend, at \$10.5 million, he pronounced himself "relieved and a little depressed."

Given the industry-standard multiplier for ultimate box-office—two and a half times the opening weekend's gross—this meant that the film was expected to gross about twenty-six million dollars. (It wound up at \$25.5 million.) By late afternoon Friday, then, the entire success of the filmmakers' years of work on "W." was clear, and Lionsgate knew to a fair degree of certainty that it would ultimately net between three and five million dollars. For a tricky film, this was a satisfying result.

That Monday, Palen was back at work on the four other films the studio would open before the end of the year. He was particularly taken with "The Spirit," the studio's first wide release at Christmas and its first to have a thirty-million-dollar marketing budget. "The Spirit," based on an obscure Will Eisner comic strip from the nineteen-forties, was Lionsgate's attempt to build a tent-pole franchise. Frank Miller, the celebrated comic-book author, had written and directed a moody, snowy, sumptuous film about a masked charmer with a self-healing body who lives to protect his city. Palen produced a crescendo of three trailers, and everything from "Spirit" trading cards to snow globes to iPhone applications.

In November, Palen and his team met with the film's producer, Deborah Del Prete, and her team to discuss his outdoor campaign. Del Prete enthusiastically seconded all of Palen's plans; in this case, the producer and the studio were equally excited about the film's prospects (and they were equally crushed when the film got swamped in the crowded holiday season, grossing only eighteen million dollars in the first two weeks). Often, however, such meetings are the final collision between the mutually aggrieved marketers, who feel the studio has been handed a worse film than they were originally sold, and the filmmakers, who suspect they're being sold a cheaper cam-



C. Barcott

"Good news—I hear the paradigm is shifting."

paign than they were led to expect. "Basically, the code is this," a prominent agent says. "We will show you thirty pumped-up people, so you will go do the junket and go on 'Letterman' and fucking perform with a sense of enthusiasm.' It's the same meeting we were having five years ago, except now there's a girl in a sweater who does the Internet."

The marketers go around the table, describing the campaign in a salmagundi of "rating points against the target," and "owning fifty per cent of voice on Yahoo," and "MySpace reskins." The producer Brian Grazer admits, "I can't say I one hundred per cent understand what the media buy really means. Though I might not say 'What?' in front of thirty people." Another prominent agent says, "If you say the creative is no good, they say, 'We love it and the testing supports it.' If you say the release date is bad, they say, 'No, it's good,' and show you that a bunch of similar films did well on similar dates. So the only thing that's discussable is how much money they're spending—which they totally lie to you about."

"I can take a puny media buy and make it sound like the Second Coming," Andrew Fogelson, the former head of marketing at Warner Bros. and Columbia, says. "I'll say, 'We're going to own the two weeks leading up to your movie: we've got thirties here, fifteens there—you're not going to be able to turn around and not see your movie.' If you know enough, you then say, 'What about the four weeks before that?' And I then reply, 'We feel this movie is really going to benefit from an ultra-concentrated effort at the end.' The alternative is to say, 'Joe, you made a shitty movie. And I work for a public company, and I want to keep my job. So we're dumping your film.'"

The Renée Zellweger comedy wound up being called "New in Town," a title no one actively disliked. And Palen wound up with a different campaign from the one he'd initially sought. Dissatisfied with his working poster—Zellweger shivering against a backdrop of townsfolk—he finally flew the star to Los Angeles one weekend and photographed her himself. Now she sits atop a Vuitton suitcase in the snow, wearing a knowing smile (and the red "Devil Wears Prada" shoes). "Renée was super dreamy," Palen says, "and she agreed that having her shivering and mis-

erable seemed less appealing than having her strong."

As for the trailer, he told me, "Now it's more fish out of water: it includes the little moment where she says 'Kay?' to the workers after her heel catches in the factory grating, and her running into a door, so she's klutzy, out of her element, more relatable." He deleted a joke about a barfing cat, and the moment when Zellweger's character points out that her co-star, Harry Connick, Jr., has beer in his beard—the testing audience didn't like them. In the end, Palen took out everything polarizing, and a voice-over supplied the warmth that he was looking for: "She may not be where she expected . . . but she's warming up to the possibilities." The trailer, in fact, became what Paul Brooks had originally suggested: a graceful string of jokes. When it was tested in "mall intercepts" of shoppers, it scored a seventy among young women and a seventy-five among older women—very good numbers. The new trailer made me want to see the movie, even though I'd already seen it. It looked like fun.

Yet Palen remained uncertain. The first two of his end-of-the-year films had done as well as he could have hoped; the second two had bombed. A campaign is only as good as the box-office proves it is—yet so much remains beyond a marketer's control. "If you want to be depressed," one marketing consultant says, "go stand in front of a multiplex on a Friday night, and watch all the people who come by to look at what's playing, and then walk away. Look at all the empty seats at a wedding, where people told you they were coming and knew you were spending three hundred dollars on them."

Many film marketers grow disillusioned with their jobs, with the lying and the cheating. But when I asked Palen whether the job had affected his understanding of our primary levers—of the human eagerness to give way to laughter, fear, sorrow, and passion—he looked at me sharply and said, "I hope not. Because owning the secrets of cattle mentality is not aspirational. I love my job, I love being a part of all this, of staying fresh and young." He was thinking aloud, not his favorite mode of self-presentation. "I mean . . . my mom still listens to Patsy

Cline. I have this—not a fear—but she stopped at a certain age, and I don't want to stop, to get old."

The last test screening I saw with Palen, on a perfect Southern California night in the Valley, was "Game." Made by the same directing team that shot "Crank," a low-budget adrenaline ride that turned a modest profit for Lionsgate, "Game" stars



Gerard Butler as a death-row prisoner in the near-future who becomes a real-life avatar in a first-person-slayer video game to the death. His goal is to escape and find his wife, a hooker avatar in another game. The film struck me as brutal, occasionally vivid, and wildly incoherent. Palen, usually chatty

after a screening, was stroking his beard. Yet the focus group, most of them youthful gamers, seemed genuinely excited by it. This made me feel old.

One of the film's directors, Brian Taylor, a restless-seeming man with a shaved head, caught up to Palen in the hall and said, "So, I think it played pretty well in the room."

"Yeah, it's always great to see it that way," Palen said.

"There's a lot of candy for the trailer," Taylor continued, with more assurance. "So many action sequences, man. Should be easy. So, what I was thinking is, this guy named Doobie cut together the battles and the battle-in-the-rave scene, and he's, like, scary—sick fast, cuts it in two days *with* sound design. Like, he's just *off*. And so we'd like him to take a pass at the trailer?"

"We can definitely talk about that when we meet," Palen said, agreeably. "Cool."

He shook hands and moved on. When one of his colleagues asked how he was doing, he said, "I'm managing my stress that they want a guy named Doobie to cut the trailer." (When Taylor followed up by e-mail, a few days later, Palen assured him that he was already "deep into a cut.") Outside, in a nearly empty parking lot, Palen said, "All the Doobieness is totally not the way you want to go with the trailer, which is more accessible, more 'He was; she was; together, they were . . .'"—straight out of the America-loves-cheese play-book. Still, he said, brightening, "It has all the raw materials for a great action trailer. I think it'll be easy to sell." ♦

A COUPLE IN CHICAGO

On May 26, 1996, Mariana Cook visited Barack and Michelle Obama in Hyde Park as part of a photography project on couples in America. What follows is excerpted from her interviews with them.

MICHELLE OBAMA: There is a strong possibility that Barack will pursue a political career, although it's unclear. There is a little tension with that. I'm very wary of politics. I think he's too much of a good guy for the kind of brutality, the skepticism.

When you are involved in politics, your life is an open book, and people can come in who don't necessarily have good intent. I'm pretty private, and like to surround myself with people that I trust and love. In politics you've got to open yourself to a lot of different people. There is a possibility that our futures will go that way, even though I want to have kids and travel, spend time with family, and like spending time with friends. But we are going to be busy people doing lots of stuff. And it'll be interesting to see what life has to offer. In many ways, we are here for the ride, just sort of seeing what opportunities open themselves up. And the more you experiment the easier it is to do different things. If I had stayed in a law firm and made partner, my life would be completely different. I wouldn't know the people I know, and I would be more risk-averse. Barack has helped me loosen up and feel comfortable with taking risks, not doing things the traditional way and sort of testing it out, because that is how he grew up. I'm more traditional; he's the one in the couple that, I think, is the less traditional individual. You can probably tell from the photographs—he's just more out there, more flamboyant. I'm more, like, "Well, let's wait and see. What did that look like? How much does it weigh?"

BARACK OBAMA: All my life, I have been stitching together a family, through stories or memories or friends or ideas. Michelle has had a very different background—very stable, two-parent family, mother at home, brother and dog, living in the same house all their lives. We represent two strands of family life in this country—the strand that is very stable and solid, and then the strand that is breaking out of the constraints of traditional families, travelling, separated, mobile. I think there was that strand in me of imagining what it would be like to have a stable, solid, secure family life.

Michelle is a tremendously strong person, and has a very strong sense of herself and who she is and where she comes from. But I also think in her eyes you can see a trace of vulnerability that most people don't know, because when she's walking through the world she is this tall, beautiful, confident woman. There is a part of her that is vulnerable and young and sometimes frightened, and I think seeing both of those things is what attracted me to her. And then what sustains our relationship is I'm extremely happy with her, and part of it has to do with the fact that she is at once completely familiar to me, so that I can be myself and she knows me very well and I trust her completely, but at the same time she is also a complete mystery to me in some ways. And there are times when we are lying in bed and I look over and sort of have a start. Because I realize here is this other person who is separate and different and has different memories and backgrounds and thoughts and feelings. It's that tension between familiarity and mystery that makes for something strong, because, even as you build a life of trust and comfort and mutual support, you retain some sense of surprise or wonder about the other person. ♦





THE ENFORCER

A Christian lawyer's global crusade.

BY SAMANTHA POWER

On a cool Kenyan summer afternoon, a Nairobi policeman in a navy-blue sweater ushered fourteen prisoners into Courtroom No. 6 of the Makadara Chief Magistrate's courthouse. The prisoners, twelve men and two women, stood in a line, handcuffed into pairs. Although the building's interior looked freshly painted, and the gardens outside were well tended, the courtroom smelled of the urine that permeated the clothing of the detainees. Many of them had been in jail for several years, and most were too poor to afford a change of clothes; few had any prospect of release or of trial. The local police prosecutor had no case files for at least a third of the prisoners, and he nonchalantly informed the presiding magistrate of missing witnesses.

The prisoners looked generally emaciated and exhausted, but one man was animated. He leaned over to discuss his case with a lawyer who sat on the bench behind him. The bone-thin detainee, who was wearing a grimy lime-green oxford shirt and gray slacks barely held up by a belt, was Duncan Mutungi. He was not a political prisoner being abused by an autocratic state; he was a night watchman who had once earned thirty dollars a month for guarding a gated community in Nairobi. In 2006, a group of armed men had abducted him, dumping him miles away, at the side of a road. Desperate to keep his job, on which his wife and three children depended, he had staggered back to his place of employment, only to discover that his assailants had stolen one of the cars that he was supposed to guard. When Mutungi reported the crime to the police, he was charged with car theft and told that he faced seven years in jail. Mutungi's fortunes changed when he received a visit from a lawyer with the International Justice Mission, a legal organization based in Washington, D.C. Ronald Rogo, a twenty-six-year-old Kenyan

lawyer employed by the mission, took his case.

That morning, I had ridden to the courthouse with Rogo and the mission's American founder, Gary Haugen. During the half-hour traffic-clogged journey, Haugen quizzed Rogo about Mutungi's case. "Tell me to stop at any point," Haugen told Rogo. "You probably need some time to clear your head."

"I am prepared, boss," Rogo said, smiling.

Earlier that morning, Haugen had asked Joe Kibugu, the field director of the mission's Nairobi office, "What effect will it have if a pack of *mzungu*—white people—"enter the courtroom? Will it help Duncan? Will it hurt?" Kibugu had said that he thought it would not hurt, and might help.

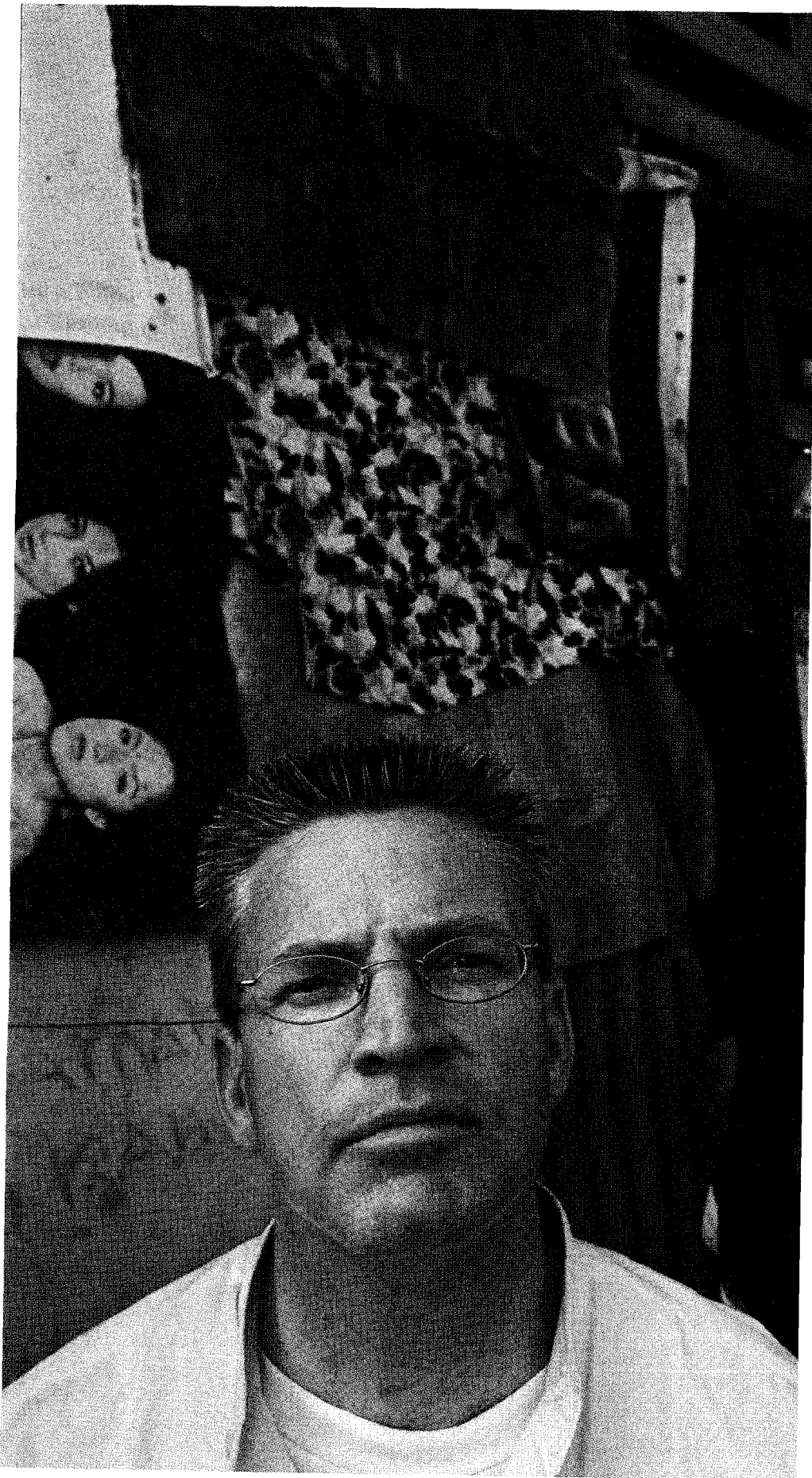
Haugen, who was educated at Harvard and at the University of Chicago Law School, is a forty-five-year-old evangelical Christian who believes that Christians have generally ignored the Biblical injunction to "seek justice, protect the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow." In 1997, he created the International Justice Mission to offer legal services to the poor in developing countries. Haugen believes that the biggest problem on earth is not too little democracy, or too much poverty, or too few anti-retroviral AIDS medicines, but, rather, an absence of proper law enforcement.

Three hundred Christian lawyers, criminal investigators, social workers, and advocates at Haugen's mission now work with local law-enforcement officials in twelve countries on behalf of individuals in need: bonded laborers, children who have been sold into prostitution, widows who have had their land seized, poor people who, like Mutungi, languish in jail for crimes they did not commit. Though Haugen recognizes the inequities of the United States'

justice system, he decided that he could achieve more by working abroad. According to a report released in June by the United Nations Development Programme, four billion people live in places with dysfunctional justice systems—abusive police, entrenched bribery, mismanaged courts. "These people don't get a sleepy lawyer or a crummy lawyer—they get *nada*," Haugen said, after finding a seat in the courtroom. "The colonial powers who built justice systems in the Third World never intended to serve these people. Colonial justice was designed to *control* these people. Then, in the nineteen-sixties, the colonial powers left, and the justice systems stayed. Nobody, when we started international development, said, 'Let's revamp the public justice system. Let's go into these places, where you either have colonial or pre-modern systems of justice, and bring to bear what we've learned about due process.' No, that part was skipped."

Over the years, Western governments have been criticized for working with foreign police who have proved abusive or corrupt. In 1973 and 1974, following revelations that American-backed security forces had committed atrocities in countries such as South Vietnam, Brazil, and Uruguay, Congress voted to prohibit the U.S. Agency for International Development from assisting foreign police or prisons. Today, the agency spends less than one per cent of its budget—some thirty million dollars—on rule-of-law programs, and most of this goes toward training. Although the State Department and Defense Department also fund police training, they generally do so to help advance U.S. strategic aims, such as combatting drug trafficking and terrorism.

Countries emerging from conflict often command headlines, congressional interest, and rule-of-law funding:



VII

Gary Haugen in Manila, the Philippines. "Prayers help," he says. "Prayers and a lawyer help more."

Bosnia and Sierra Leone in the nineties, Iraq and Afghanistan today. Chronically flawed justice systems, like the one in Kenya, tend to get far less support. Haugen is incredulous: "Without investing in the rule of law for the poor, none of the other investments we make will be sustainable."

In 2007, Transparency International published a report underscoring the extent of the problem. Seventy-nine per cent of people surveyed in Cameroon, and seventy-two per cent of Cambodians, reported paying a bribe to obtain basic services in the previous year. The study also confirmed Haugen's view that the poor are more likely to pay bribes than the wealthy, often to avoid harassment. According to a report published by Afrobarometer, a public-opinion research group, only fifty-three per cent of people surveyed in sub-Saharan Africa expressed confidence that senior government officials would be brought to justice if they committed a serious crime. In Kenya, sixty-four per cent deemed most or all of the police corrupt. A World Bank study of twenty-three countries found that the poor saw police "not as a source of help and security, but rather of harm, risk, and impoverishment."

Many of the systemic flaws are due less to corruption than to judicial overload. According to the U.N.D.P. report, India has eleven judges for every million people, and more than twenty million legal cases pending. (The International Centre for Prison Studies found that nearly seventy per cent of the detainees in Indian prisons have never been convicted of any crime.) Some Indian civil cases take more than twenty years to reach court.

In the West, the cause of public justice suffers from what Haugen calls a "constituency gap." Liberal activists who have promoted the rights of the poor often feel ambivalent about police, prosecutors, and jail wardens, who have long been agents of oppression. Conservatives, meanwhile, have traditionally been skeptical about providing assistance to foreign governments, unless America's vital interests are at stake. And Westerners across the political spectrum have only a vague sense of the breakdown of legal systems in poor countries—as Haugen puts it, the rule

of law is "the invisible oxygen we breathe at home." He says, "The people who care about injustice don't tend to spend a lot of time in courtrooms or police stations. We tend to use words like 'corrupt' and give up on these places."

In the Nairobi courtroom, Rogo stood up and answered the magistrate's questions, then made his arguments. "The police submitted no evidence tying my client to the theft," he said. "And the Registry of Motor Vehicles records indicate that the complainant who accused Duncan of the crime does not even own the vehicle, as he claimed."

During a break in the proceedings, Rogo asked Haugen if he would like to speak with Mutungi. Haugen went up to the bench where the detainees were squeezed together. He spoke to Mutungi for a moment; then the men clasped hands, knelt, and prayed for several minutes. When Haugen returned to his seat, he told me, "We prayed to God for Duncan's freedom. Prayers help. Prayers and a lawyer help more."

A week later, after fifteen months in jail, Mutungi was acquitted and set free.

Because of his religious fervor and his eagerness to intervene in other countries, Haugen bears a superficial resemblance to another American: George W. Bush. In other ways, too, Haugen fits the stereotype of a Christian conservative. A former high-school football player with a crewcut, he has coached peewee football and taught Sunday school, and says "Golly" with unnerving frequency. I have never heard him use profanity. (He says that he has done so in the past, but such moments tended "to involve hammers.") When I accompanied him on trips to Kenya, Cambodia, the Philippines, and India, he wore short-sleeved white oxford shirts, khakis, and Dockers. I asked him if he ever changed his wardrobe. He said, "When it's cold, I wear long sleeves."

His office, in Crystal City, Virginia, resembles the corporate law firms across the Potomac: marble desks, dark wood, and a willed air of humorlessness which, he says, "is intended to ooze 'se-

rious.'" Few law firms, however, begin each workday by assembling for thirty minutes of silence and "prayerful preparation." Employees who arrive at the office between eight-thirty and nine o'clock find the door locked, and a sign suggesting that they go get a cup of coffee. (Another prayer session is held at eleven.)

But Haugen is not that easy to pigeonhole. He is fiercely critical of Christians whose moral rhetoric is not backed up with action. He does not speak a foreign language, but he is proud that ninety per cent of the mission's international staff are nationals of the countries where they work. And though he insists that the mission hire only Christian lawyers, investigators, and administrators—the group's Web site asks job applicants to include "a statement of faith," in which they describe their "spiritual disciplines" and their place of worship—the mission takes cases without inquiring about the creed of the potential client.

Haugen has great respect for activists at advocacy organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, but he prefers to recruit government prosecutors, defense lawyers, and corporate lawyers who have extensive casework experience. "The circumstances afford no generosity for those who bring only good intentions, the best of motives or the most tender of hearts," he has argued. "Without a fierce commitment to the sharpest standards in operational and tactical excellence, we do not honor God."

Though Haugen acknowledges that police in poor countries are often purveyors of terror and injustice against the poor, he concluded early on that his organization would have to collaborate with the police in order to punish criminals. This, along with the mission's support for police raids on brothels, has proved controversial in the human-rights community. Haugen knows that the failed policies of President Bush make it harder for the International Justice Mission to get a hearing. He explained that many make assumptions about "people like us"—"Americans who intervene in other countries, law-enforcement types, Christians. Obviously, after the past eight years, people have negative associations with Ameri-

cans talking about morality abroad." He went on, "Others might associate Christianity with the religious right and a political agenda as it relates to sex.... If there's a missionary picture of us, too, there are a lot of people with negative views of missionaries. That's a lot to carry." Nonetheless, he said, "Our basic attitude is let's just get on with the work of offering poor clients the highest-quality legal representation."

Haugen has slowly made inroads with the political mainstream: World Bank economists recently asked him for advice, and he has testified before Congress a half-dozen times. Later this month, he will speak at the World Economic Forum, in Davos, Switzerland. And Haugen has earned the admiration of Larry Cox, the executive director of Amnesty International U.S.A. Cox worked previously at the Ford Foundation, where he helped arrange one of the mission's first large grants. He applauds Haugen's focus on helping individual clients, saying, "He will not sacrifice individuals to make a larger point or to earn political favor."

But Haugen's core support comes from the Christian community. In 2004, he spoke to twenty thousand people gathered at Saddleback Church, in southern California, which is run by Rick Warren, the author of the best-seller "The Purpose-Driven Life," who will speak at President-elect Barack Obama's Inauguration. Last August, Haugen gave a talk at the Willow Creek Leadership Summit, an annual religious conference, before sixty thousand people. Largely owing to support from Christians, the organization's budget has grown rapidly, from two hundred thousand dollars in 1997 to twenty-two million in 2008. As a result, the mission's lawyers, investigators, and social workers have provided legal assistance to nearly fifteen thousand people.

Haugen grew up in Sacramento, the youngest of six children. His parents were high-school sweethearts: his mother, one of twelve children, was a devout Baptist who voted Republican; his father, a physician, was an atheist and a Democrat. "They cancelled each other out at the polls," Haugen said. He believes that there was an "authenticity" to his father's rejection of religion.



"I don't think he was ever introduced to an intellectually credible presentation of the Christian faith," he noted. "He saw religion as a crutch." But his father never questioned his son's early embrace of Christianity.

Haugen had wanted to be a lawyer ever since elementary school, where he read about Abraham Lincoln's emancipation of the slaves. As a fifth grader, he became fascinated by the civil-rights movement after reading a *Reader's Digest* biography of Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1981, he started at Harvard, and began deepening his faith by questioning it. He and a half-dozen classmates formed a reading group in which they considered the secular critiques offered by thinkers such as Nietzsche and Durkheim. The more he studied alternative approaches, the more convinced he was that Christianity offered the clearest guidance for living life justly.

In 1985, after graduating, he travelled to South Africa. He served as an intern for Michael Cassidy, who, along with Desmond Tutu, ran the National Initiative for Reconciliation, a church-based effort aimed at ending apartheid. Three days after Haugen arrived in a black township, the South African regime declared martial law. He saw priests locked up, blacks beaten. Secu-

rity forces detained him for attending a multiracial church service without permission. "What struck me was that in a country just utterly caged by fear—where whites were terrified, blacks were terrified, where anybody who tried to do the right thing was going to get crushed—I got to be with these Christians who had the most surprising absence of fear. They just did the right thing." He went on, "I came to believe that they lived that way because they actually believed that what Jesus said was true. And I found that, to the extent that I acted as if I believed what Jesus said was true, I lived without fear."

He returned to the United States in 1986, deferred an acceptance to the University of Chicago Law School, and began working on a book called "The Nations Christians Killed," which would describe the role that Christian churches had played in subjugating blacks in South Africa. An evangelical publishing company planned to bring out the book, which received significant advance publicity at an annual Christian book fair. Not long after, however, the publisher dropped the book. "I blamed myself," Haugen recalls. "Maybe I got too puffed up or too proud, and that was God's way of bringing me back."

In 1988, he started law school. Dur-



"His wife and family will decide on the course of treatment, but, as his ex, feel free to open up a few old wounds."

ing the summer break, the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights sent him to the Philippines to conduct his first human-rights investigation. In 1986, Corazón Aquino had unseated the dictator Ferdinand Marcos, but her government was failing to prosecute police or military officials for massacres carried out during the ongoing conflict with Communist rebels. Haugen focussed on the Lupao massacre of 1987, in which soldiers in the Filipino Army had rounded up and shot civilians who were hiding in rice paddies, killing seventeen. He travelled to Lupao and interviewed survivors. Two years later, the Lawyers Committee issued a report, written principally by Haugen, documenting such abuses and the Manila authorities' insufficient efforts to prosecute them. The Filipino government did not pursue those implicated in the report. "These people had opened up to me, and yet they were no closer to achieving real justice," Haugen said.

After law school, he joined the Department of Justice, as a trial attorney in the civil-rights division. He married Jan Larsen, a staff assistant at a law firm. (They now have four children.) In 1994, Haugen took a short leave to direct the United Nations' investigation of geno-

cide in Rwanda, gathering the preliminary evidence needed in order to set up a war-crimes tribunal. In Rwanda, a predominantly Catholic country, the first visits he made were to pastors and missionary doctors, as he felt that he could quickly establish trust with them. He believed that the Christian network was an untapped resource in the human-rights world, even as he saw how badly some Rwandan clergy had failed their people. He was sickened to come across charred piles of bodies in a church where Tutsi had expected to find sanctuary. He took down the testimony of a father who saw his three small children hacked to death with machetes. At one massacre site, Haugen rolled back the decaying body of a woman and found the corpse of her child beneath her.

Six weeks later, after returning home, Haugen felt disoriented. In church, his mind drifted into calculations of how long it would take a machete-wielding gang to wipe out the congregation. Although the Salvation Army, World Vision, and other Christian organizations fed the hungry and sheltered the homeless, no Christian organization that he knew of had heeded the Bible's appeals for justice ("Break the arm of the wicked and evil man; call him to account for his

wickedness that would not be found out"). He resolved that Christians serving God had to do more than pray for the victims of cruelty; they had to use the law to help rescue them. "This is not a God who offers sympathy, best wishes," he later wrote. "This is a God who wants evildoers brought to account and vulnerable people protected—here and now!"

Haugen decided to form an independent justice agency, and his original mission statement laid out the four functions that drive the organization today: victim relief, perpetrator accountability, victim "aftercare," and structural prevention of violence. He wanted the organization to be explicitly Christian, because the ministries and relief groups in poor areas would be quicker to trust and refer cases to a Christian group; it could mobilize a grassroots constituency of American Christians; and, as he saw it, the prayers offered by the church community had proved to "make a difference in human history." But he stressed that the mission did not need to maintain a public Christian identity in places where that would impede its performance.

Haugen left the Department of Justice on a Friday and launched the mission the following Monday, in an office park in northern Virginia. He hired an administrator who had been a member of a church youth group that his wife had helped run, and secured desks for two interns.

In search of his first overseas clients, Haugen flew to Manila. Social workers and advocates described rampant abuse, but none expressed the desire to hand the cases over to an American who had parachuted in. On his way to the airport, feeling dejected, he visited a home for abused and abandoned girls, supported by the Christian and Missionary Alliance. The women who ran the facility told him about a twelve-year-old girl who had been raped the previous year and had subsequently given birth to a daughter. The girl had reported the crime, and a judge had ordered an arrest warrant. However, the police had not taken the suspect into custody, perhaps because he was thought to be the son-in-law of a police officer. Haugen offered his help, and the social workers accepted, supplying him with a copy of

the warrant and a photo of the suspect. He had his first case.

Back in Virginia, Haugen scanned the rape suspect's photo and designed a wanted poster. He then sent a formal letter to the chief of the Philippine National Police, as well as to the judge who had ordered the suspect's arrest. Haugen avoided accusation. He recalls, "My tone was 'I'm sure you are not aware of this, but . . .'" A few days later, Haugen received a fax of a page from a Manila newspaper with the headline "INTERNATIONAL LETTER LEADS TO ARREST OF RAPE SUSPECT."

As Haugen built his organization, he finished writing another book, "Good News About Injustice," which was issued in 1999 by InterVarsity Press, a Christian publishing house. It has sold nearly ninety thousand copies in English, and has been translated into French, Spanish, and Mandarin. Haugen appealed to Christians to answer God's summons to prevent injustice, which he defined as "the strong using force and deceit to take from the weak." In the book, Haugen casts himself as one who too frequently overlooks the needs of strangers. "I can move from torture on the evening news to touchdowns on Monday Night Football with almost the same mental and emotional ease as my channel changer," he writes.

The book also reads as a prosecutor's brief. Accounts of violent crimes against the poor are followed by quotes from the Bible demanding that Christians respond to injustice. Haugen presents a list of tangible ways that Christians can take action: praying for individuals enslaved, trafficked, or imprisoned; volunteering their own professional legal services; making personal appeals to government or corporate officials; donating to the mission. Haugen includes examples of people of faith who, in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, combatted human trafficking, child labor, and lynchings. Noticeably absent from his account are similar tales of modern-day evangelicals.

When he started out, Haugen assumed that the mission's defense lawyers and advocates would help their clients work within local justice frameworks. However, as the mission ex-

expanded its reach—establishing its first permanent field offices in Thailand and India—he saw that his organization would also have to address the fact that courtrooms were crumbling, magistrates didn't show up for work, police were agents of abuse, and clients fundamentally distrusted legal authorities. The poor didn't just need lawyers; they needed new legal systems.

Each year, in its fourteen field offices around the world, the legal teams of the International Justice Mission take on a wide range of poor clients. Yet Haugen's group has become best known as an organization that partners with police to raid brothels and rescue trafficking victims. The mission has carried out its most controversial brothel raids in Thailand and Cambodia.

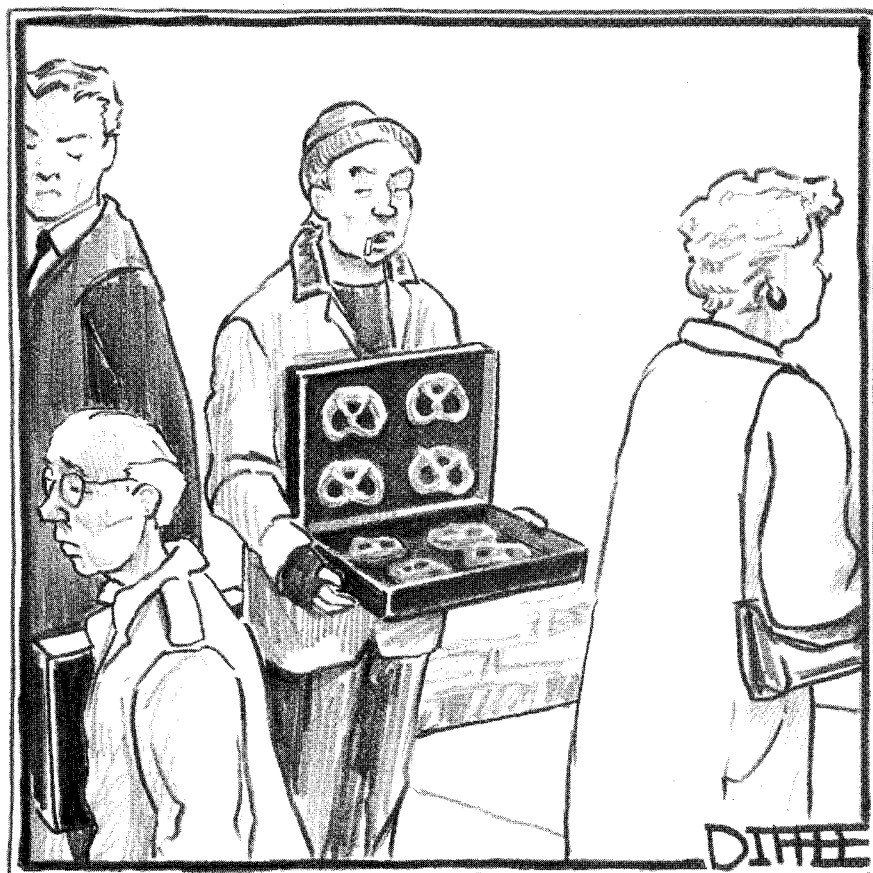
I visited Cambodia with Haugen in June, 2007. We met for dinner in the lobby of a hotel in Phnom Penh and chatted for several minutes before I noticed that his eyes were red. "Do you have allergies?" I asked. "No," he said. He cupped his face in his thick hands

and began weeping. He had just reread the files on some girls who had been trafficked.

The next morning, Haugen and his team visited a facility called the Agape Shelter. Dozens of girls—many as young as six, none older than sixteen—rushed out of the cafeteria and greeted Haugen by bowing, their palms pressed together. He clumsily responded in kind. The girls squealed with laughter at his greeting, and he feigned being upset, causing them to giggle even more. Not all of the mission's aftercare partners are run by Christians, but this one was, which meant that the girls were encouraged to take part in Bible study. Haugen was asked to lead the group in prayer before a meal.

The girls were slender, and half of them barely came up to Haugen's waist. Scanning the room, he said to himself, "There are just so many."

Most of the girls were dressed in jeans, skirts, or sweatpants, but one of the smallest girls—she could not have weighed more than sixty pounds—marched toward me in bright-orange



"Get your knockoff pretzels."

Teddy-bear-print pajamas. Eleven years old, the girl, whom I'll call Suzie, was carrying a soccer ball under her arm. She wrapped her other arm around my waist and let go only to give another girl—her sister, I later learned—a chance to do the same.

Sharon Cohn, the organization's senior vice-president for justice operations, told me that when Suzie was ten years old her mother had arranged for her and her younger sister, whom I'll call Linda, to live with a fifty-three-year-old American, Michael Joseph Pepe, who, over a period of months, sexually assaulted the sisters and five other girls in his home in Cambodia. The mission worked with the Cambodian police and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to help secure Pepe's arrest, in 2006. Pepe was deported to the United States and convicted last May on seven felony counts; his sentencing is expected in March. Under a law that makes sexual offenses against children abroad by Americans punishable in the United States, he faces up to two hundred and ten years in prison.

As I spoke with Cohn, the girls summoned Haugen outside for an impromptu soccer match. Suzie soon pulled me into a room filled with toys, steering me toward a stack of "Happy Happy Stickers"—peel-off images of corsets, scarves, silk blouses, billowy skirts, and glittery evening gowns, which could be mixed and matched to "dress" a cartoon drawing of a blond woman. None of the packets of stickers, which had probably been donated by American or European friends of the shelter, had been opened; the girls seemed content to admire them in their pristine form. Suzie asked me which dress I preferred, and I picked a long evening dress. She shook her head, and said, "This is better," pointing to black lingerie and leather boots.

A Cambodian court had just acquitted Suzie's mother on charges of having sold the sexual services of her daughters to Pepe. The mission thought that the mother must have known about the abuse, but, as a staff member at the shelter told me, "Cambodian judges are having a really hard time accepting the idea that a mother would sell her own

children." The prosecutor's case was weakened by the fact that Suzie and Linda refused to testify against their mother. Linda had told the social worker, "Even if she sold us, she only did so because she was so poor."

Upstairs, Suzie showed me a small stuffed-animal collection. I asked her the name of a worn hound dog with droopy ears. She shrugged, looked up in the air for a few seconds, as if to ponder the question, and then said, "His name is Gary." She grabbed my hand, and we set off to share the news with Haugen. As we left the bedroom, a group of Suzie's friends descended upon us. I leaned over to talk to one of them, and an older girl, a thirteen-year-old, reached over and attempted to fasten the top button of my blouse. "Better closed," she said.

The mission's best-known raids occurred in 2002 and 2003 in Svay Pak, a village seven miles north of Phnom Penh. On two previous occasions, Haugen's group had submitted to Cambodian officials video evidence and testimony suggesting that young girls were being sold there, but the police had failed to respond. Haugen's organization did not then have a permanent base in Cambodia, but sent investigators to Svay Pak on short field assignments, in order to build a case so compelling that the Cambodian authorities would take action.

In May, 2002, a mission investigator infiltrated several of Svay Pak's brothels. He shot undercover footage of the prostitutes, most of whom were Vietnamese; in one sequence, a five-year-old girl was perched on the hip of another girl, who pushed her forward for sale. The investigator was permitted to take four girls under fourteen off the brothel's premises, to his hotel room. When the group arrived at the hotel, Sharon Cohn, the lead lawyer on the investigation, told the girls that they were going to a safe place. The mission submitted an evidentiary report to the Cambodian police, who, a week later, conducted a raid on three brothels, rescuing an additional fourteen underage girls.

The police initially dropped off the girls at a home run by social workers. About a week later, however, the police

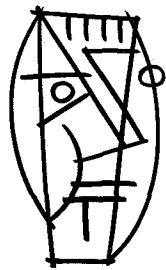
returned and arrested the girls, on immigration charges. Six girls were eventually convicted, sentenced to thirty days in jail, and prepared for deportation to Vietnam. Clearly, the mission could not rely on the police to act in the best interests of trafficking victims.

Haugen, with his emphasis on individual clients and single cases, could still count the operation a success. The organization's Christian ethos offered consolation: "Each little girl is made in the image of God," Haugen likes to say. "Each one rescued is a blessing." However, the results seemed less encouraging to a human-rights organization that the mission hired to review the evidence from one of its raids. Peter Sainsbury, who conducted the review, argues that the women and girls who remained in the brothels were left worse off by the raid. According to Sainsbury, the Svay Pak brothel owners, suspecting that health and social-service workers had tipped off the police, blocked the groups from providing care. (The mission contends that their attempt to independently verify this allegation turned up no evidence.)

When the mission's team returned to Cambodia, the following year, it assembled information on some forty underage girls who were being trafficked. Under the guise of planning a large sex party for a group of American visitors, the team members insisted on seeing younger girls. One pimp presented them with children between eight and ten.

Haugen invited NBC's "Dateline" to document the next phase of the investigation, believing that the Cambodian police would behave more professionally on camera. In fact, the police pledged full cooperation, assigning eighty officers to the raid and asking the mission to supply longer-term anti-trafficking training. Haugen flew to Cambodia two weeks before the police operation.

Haugen's field operatives had hoped that the ruse of the sex party would allow them to remove the girls from the brothel, thus minimizing the traumatic effects of the raid. But when the time came for them to take the girls away the pimps reneged on the deal. The mission alerted the police that there had been a hitch: the girls would be present for the





"Should I come out to everybody at once or one cubicle at a time?"

raid. A short while later, armed police officers barged into the brothel, and mission operatives used batons and pepper spray to subdue the pimps, as "Dateline" cameras rolled. The girls fled or hid under beds. At the same time, police were raiding other sites in the village. According to Sainsbury, women not involved in trafficking were swept up, including a noodle seller who suffered a stroke in jail and died; in a hunt for gold, prison guards ripped out her teeth with pliers. (The mission acknowledged that the police, acting independently, might have arrested innocent people, but noted that its operatives had presented evidence to the police only about those who appeared in its investigative videotapes.)

Haugen, who had been praying at the safe house, got a call telling him that nine girls had been rescued at one brothel and twenty-eight at others. Among them was the five-year-old who had been pushed forward in the video, but for the most part these were not the same forty girls whose photocopied images Haugen had studied for weeks. The girls clutched each other as they walked barefoot into the safe house.

This time, the mission had hired a doctor and local social workers to help the girls get settled.

The Cambodian police arrested thirteen Vietnamese suspects, charging them with human trafficking and conspiracy in the sex trade. In subsequent trials, Haugen's group presented evidence against four of the suspects, all of whom were convicted: two were sentenced to fifteen years, two to five years.

When "Dateline" aired its story, in January, 2004, its depiction of the mission's American lawyers and investigators liberating children from brothels won the organization thousands of new financial supporters. Among many in the human-rights community, however, the mission gained a reputation for cowboy behavior and media sensationalism. Haugen also stumbled into a wider debate over the legality of prostitution, which he would rather have avoided.

In 2000, Haugen testified before Congress in support of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. When passed, the act withheld U.S. financial support from countries that failed to make "significant efforts" to prevent sex trafficking and forced prostitution. In 2003, when the

measure was submitted for reauthorization, the act included a new provision calling for the suspension of aid to organizations that "promote, support, or advocate the legalization or practice of prostitution." The Bush Administration adamantly opposed not only trafficking but also the commercial sex industry, arguing that prostitution was "the oldest form of oppression." Although Haugen's group did not publicly support the new provision, it did not oppose it, either.

In the view of professional sex workers and some human-rights organizations, it is not prostitution itself that harms women but, rather, the refusal to treat prostitutes as legitimate workers, leading police to repress, extort, and assault them, and making it difficult for them to obtain health services. Sex workers in countries such as India and Thailand had begun to organize, gaining access to condoms, health services, literacy and vocational programs, and loans. In some cases, sex-worker unions had barred police from brothels.

Sex-worker advocates were aghast at the raids, and at Haugen's failure to reach out to them. Just as the advocates were starting to reduce the presence of

police in red-light districts, a human-rights organization was bringing law enforcement back. These critics believed that the mission's raids gave police more opportunities to degrade women—by violating them, by rounding them up in the sweeps, or by deporting them. They also pointed to a number of women “rescued” by Haugen’s group who had swiftly tried to return to the brothels.

Melissa Ditmore, who directs the Sex Worker Project at the Urban Justice Center, in New York, said of Haugen and his investigators, “When they storm into a brothel on a raid, and the police seize the sex workers, the women think they are being kidnapped and taken away by the police to be raped, which is what contact with the police usually means. This is a form of terrorization.”

In 2007, Françoise Girard, the director of the Open Society Institute’s Public Health Program, in New York, met with mission officials to discuss the raids. Afterward, she asked Haugen to issue a statement saying that his group was working to combat trafficking but

did not oppose prostitution more generally. He refused. Girard speculated to me that Haugen had resisted issuing a statement because he hadn’t wanted to jeopardize the group’s funding from the Bush Administration or the religious right. Haugen denies this. “We are not a statement-issuing organization,” he told me, adding, “We have been trying so very hard to avoid getting caught up in the quite heated ideological debate about prostitution.”

Haugen is far more eager to debate his human-rights colleagues on the question of engaging with the police. He recognizes the systemic nature of police corruption: in one city where the mission works, more than a third of its raids were sabotaged by the perpetrators’ being tipped off, sometimes by the police. And the mission acknowledges that, during brothel raids, police officers are occasionally among those caught hiring teen-age girls as sex partners. Nonetheless, Haugen does not believe that giving up on the police is an option, unless one is prepared to give up on the rule of law altogether.

Ken Roth, the executive director of

Human Rights Watch, who had served on Haugen’s advisory board from the outset, resigned last year to protest the mission’s raid-and-rescue tactics. “I didn’t have confidence that the mission was actively seeking to mitigate the harms that have come from police actions,” he told me. “The organization never consulted the advisory board about this, and when I complained they seemed unwilling to admit even the possibility that their approach could be improved.”

The mission had issued a protocol for its foreign police partners, designed to minimize the adverse impact of anti-trafficking operations. The protocol calls for the police to protect the sex workers from the media, assure them that they are not the ones being arrested, and conduct enforcement operations in a manner that does not implicate organizations providing social services to sex workers. But Girard and others are unsatisfied. “What we’re upset with is encouraging the police to use raids and rescues as a method,” she said. “When you raid a brothel, you sweep up everyone, and then the mischief begins. Why would you do that, except that it looks good on TV?”

Holly Burkhalter, who became the mission’s vice-president for government relations after spending two decades at Human Rights Watch and Physicians for Human Rights, said, “We are learning as we go. It is true that our first order of business is to rescue the little ones and punish their traffickers. But our goal is also to do no harm, and we have to take into account that the police are cruel and horrible to the sex workers. Having said that, I wish our critics would ask, ‘What are the consequences of saying the police can never get involved when a brothel owner traffics an eleven-year-old? Sex-worker unions aren’t an alternative to the rule of law.’”

Haugen’s critics repeatedly use the word “zealous” to describe the mission’s work. A few call it “fundamentalist.” Haugen knows that the mission’s religious identity is discomfiting to non-Christians, but he says that he doesn’t have the strength to do the work without a religious foundation. “I don’t know how to do it another way,” he told me.



“Never underestimate the middle class.”

His insistence on hiring only Christians can feel discriminatory. Aryeh Neier, a founder of Human Rights Watch and the current president of the Open Society Institute, criticizes the requirement. "If you are unwilling to have diversity in your own institution, you betray an unwillingness to allow diversity among those you are attempting to assist," he told me. "If it is objectionable to limit employment by reasons of race, I think it is comparably objectionable to limit by reason of religion. By all means, recruit Christians, but why exclude others?"

In a few countries, Haugen can't simultaneously stick to his insistence on Christian staff and his preference for handing over operations to national staff. In Cambodia, for example, only around two per cent of the population identify themselves as Christian, and the entire country has fewer than six hundred lawyers. It will be a long time before the mission field office is run by a Cambodian. At dinner after observing a day of training, I told Sharon Cohn that the mission's exclusion of non-Christian legal professionals would sometimes clash with its intention to strengthen the indigenous legal community. She acknowledged that sometimes there could be costs to relying on outsiders. "The contracted workers don't have that look in their eye that the national staff have," she said. "No matter how committed they are, they don't have the same investment. And, sure, we ask ourselves, 'If we were going for brain surgery, wouldn't we want the best brain surgeon, instead of the best Christian brain surgeon?'" But she stressed their exacting hiring standards, and said that she personally couldn't do the work she was doing without the daily prayers and Christian solidarity.

Non-Christians, Haugen told me, would find themselves out of place at the mission during prayer sessions. "If you don't share that faith, praying is a weird thing," he said. "It's a conversation with an invisible person who is not in the room." Even Christians who have come to the mission from more secular jobs find the adjustment difficult. Holly Burkhalter, the Human Rights Watch veteran, joined the International Justice Mission in 2006. Unaccustomed to proclaiming her faith publicly, she found

the prayer sessions unnerving at first. She recalled, "It was one thing for us to pray for the client who had H.I.V., but another thing to pray for the person trying to find new office furniture. I thought God had better things to do than help us find office furniture. But I trusted that Gary knew what he was doing."

After dozens of conversations with Haugen, in which I puzzled over how he could exclude non-Christian legal professionals from such vital work, I finally realized that public justice systems weren't all he was trying to fix. He was also trying to reenergize the social conscience of Christians in the United States. "I saw my own faith community as spiritually impoverished," he told me. He felt that Christians had become so caught up with knowing God deeply that they were thinking too little about meeting the needs of their neighbors. "Jesus put these things together," Haugen told me. "That they were ever separated is absurd."

Haugen came of age at a time when the small group of Christians speaking most loudly for Jesus were not, in his view, representative of the wider Christian community. He told me, "Evangelicals come from a tradition that says, 'Don't be involved in politics. Try to go to Heaven.' But then we entered a phase where the religious right said, 'It's our duty as Christians to be involved in politics, and here's what Christians should be politically involved in fighting: abortion, gay rights, Communism.' Now, today's Christians are saying, 'Whoa, who says?' and 'Surely there is more.'" At his Willow Creek lecture in August, Haugen never mentioned James Dobson, Pat Robertson, or other leaders of the religious right by name, but he called on the crowd to join with him in leading "our faith community out of a prison of triviality and fear." He continued, "May this be the generation of Christian leaders that resets the bar of excellence."

Haugen's Christian audiences seem to respond to his challenge. I have attended several of the organization's fund-raisers, and its appeals for money are the most direct I have ever heard. In December, at a fund-raising dinner at a hotel in Washington, D.C., twelve

hundred people watched a video that told tales of girls' coercion into sexual slavery, followed by accounts of their liberation and redemption. At the end of the night, the mission's development officer announced, "There are envelopes at your table.... A mere two hundred and fifty dollars will pay for the first six critical days of after-care.... Some of you may be interested in giving a gift of stock or property. In this economy, where the stock market has been up and down, the work of I.J.M. might be your best bet for a high return. As you give, we have some music for you to give by." The Christian-influenced band Ten Shekel Shirt then played a closing song. The dinner raised a half-million dollars.

This past summer, I travelled with Haugen to Chennai, India, and observed the organization's efforts to get the police and the courts to enforce the country's prohibition on "bonded labor." Although this form of slavery was banned in India in 1976, it remains a shockingly common practice. Rice mills, cotton and garment factories, brick kilns, and cigarette factories are among the places staffed by slaves.

Many hoped that the economic booms in China and India would produce "trickle-down justice" for the poor. In theory, a new generation of business owners would demand that courtrooms be built, lawyers and judges trained, and corruption rooted out. Instead, Haugen told me, people with means have devised "workarounds" that bypass the public justice system. Businessmen hire private security firms in order to avoid dealing with the local police. And they turn to arbitration or private dispute-resolution mechanisms instead of the ineffective public courts. As a result, economic development has far outpaced legal justice.

At a ramshackle school and boarding house outside Chennai, Haugen and I met Vijayan, a thirty-two-year-old who told me that he became a slave when he was seventeen. In 1993, he said, he had borrowed five hundred rupees—fifteen dollars—from a rice-mill owner who employed the young woman Vijayan intended to marry. The loan enabled him to pay for a small wedding. He began working at the

mill; soon afterward, the owner informed Vijayan that he actually owed him twenty-five thousand rupees—seven hundred and fifty dollars. Still, Vijayan thought that he could pay back the loan, as the owner insisted that both he and his wife work without a single day off and allowed him only three hours' sleep a night. After a few months, he realized that the loan had been a ruse: he, his wife, and any children that they might have would be forced to work an average of eighteen hours a day every day for the rest of their lives. They would be fed porridge made with damaged rice that could not be sold in the market; their children would not be permitted to play or to attend school. By 2006, Vijayan's four-year-old daughter, Devi, was spending her days cleaning a cow shed, and his ten-year-old son, Kumar, was carrying husks or helping to spread rice to dry in the sun.

Vijayan and his family tried to escape, but the owner tracked them down and took them back to the mill. Although they were physically abused on their return—the owner's favorite instrument was a belt from the mill machinery—Vijayan said they came to view themselves as fortunate after another man who attempted to escape, Bonda, was placed in iron chains and kept in solitary confinement for a week. By the time he was released, he couldn't stand up, and blood oozed out of his ears.

Hours after Bonda's release, the Indian police stormed the mill, alongside Indian staffers from Haugen's group. They asked Vijayan and the other laborers whether they were being held against their will. During police raids to free slaves, the laborers are often too frightened of the owner to speak up—the mission has been involved in several cases in which only young children told the truth. But at this mill Bonda's injuries were a catalyst: thirty-nine people declared that they had been enslaved.

Later that day, the mission helped arrange for the government to issue each of the laborers a personal "release certificate," establishing that they were debt-free. The form, developed by Hau-

gen's organization, was adopted by Indian authorities in 2005. The Indian government is also required to provide each freed slave with twenty thousand rupees in compensation. The mission helped the workers set up bank accounts and place their children in schools or shelters. This is Haugen's ultimate goal: to establish protocols of justice that can become official state practice.

Since 2003, the mission's office in Chennai, which now employs three social workers, five investigators, and six lawyers, has obtained twelve hundred release certificates from the authorities, and placed nearly twenty-five hundred freed slaves and family members in aftercare. The mission's commitment to Vijayan didn't end once he was freed; its lawyers waited at police stations for hours, trying—unsuccessfully—to get the Indian police to issue a warrant for the arrest of the rice-mill owner.

The Chennai team now has fifty-six bonded-labor cases active in the Indian courts, and it has won twelve convictions, though some of the sentences have been shockingly light. (One slaveowner spent only a day in jail.) More than ninety-four per cent of the bonded laborers helped by the mission's Chennai office have remained free. Yet Haugen does not overstate the achievement. Human-rights groups estimate that between twenty-five and sixty million Indians live in a condition of slavery, and he says that the number helped by his organization is a "drop in the bucket."



Haugen is moved by the gratitude of the individuals he encounters in the field, but he says that the mission cannot itself become a workaround that allows governments to shirk their responsibilities. One advantage of managing individual cases is that it allows the mission to identify the specific gaps in developing countries' legal systems. Others, however, will have to undertake the large-scale structural reforms. In Cambodia Haugen's group established a permanent presence five years ago, and since then it has offered anti-trafficking training to two hundred and fifty Cambodian police officers. Nevertheless, mission lawyers and trainers still encounter pervasive po-

lice corruption that their training sessions can't fix. They also learned that the monthly police salary in Cambodia was forty dollars. The mission could do little more than testify before Congress about the correlation between the police officers' low pay and their involvement in sex trafficking.

Haugen hopes that the mission's work can ultimately inspire demand for public justice, in the same way that, over the past decade, AIDS advocates incited demand for anti-retroviral medicines in sub-Saharan Africa. Only if governments feel pressure from the public will they allocate resources to law enforcement, and right now citizens are too pessimistic about their prospects to apply that pressure.

On our trip to Kenya, we visited a small village forty miles from Nairobi, where the mission had helped the police successfully prosecute the rape of a six-year-old girl, whom I'll call Geraldine. Mary and Charles, Geraldine's parents, hosted a small village gathering to celebrate the conviction, which came two years after the crime. Haugen was puzzled that cultural taboos didn't preclude such an event. Joe Kibugu, the Nairobi office director, told him, "Mary and Charles want to show their neighbors that it is the *rapists* who should be ashamed, and that they are proud of standing up for justice for their daughter."

As we entered the dusty village of huts, Mary and the other older women passed around refreshments. After Haugen thanked the parents for their welcome, the young girls, including Geraldine, performed a dance for the visitors. As the tempo picked up, the older women and the men joined in. The most flamboyant dancer was an elderly white-haired man, who circled the group and poked his cane toward the heavens in praise. After the dancing, the mission staff mingled with the villagers, and I asked Mary what the older man's relationship to Geraldine was. She said that she had never seen him before. I approached the man, who was sixty-seven years old. He said that he had spent two hours walking to the village that morning, because he had heard that they were celebrating the conviction of a child rapist, and that lawyers would be

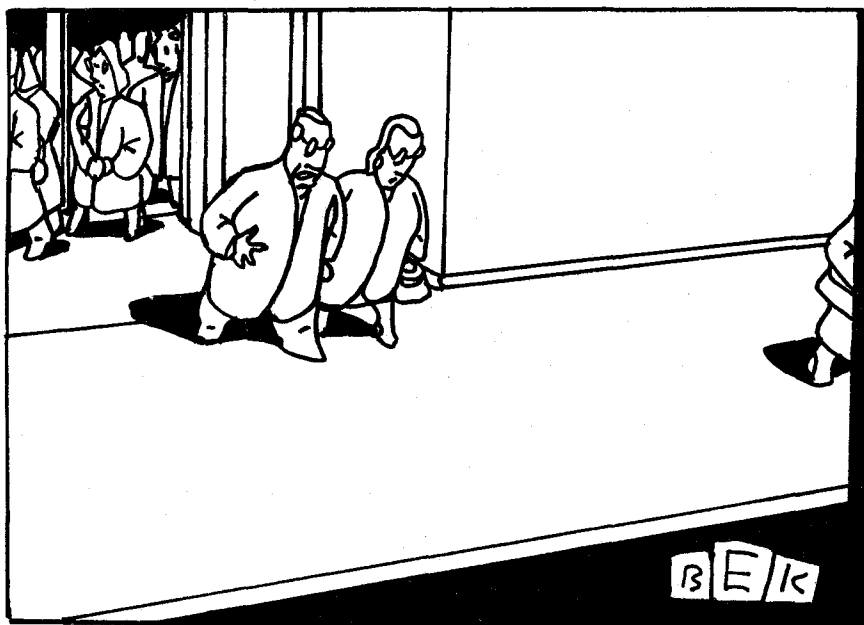
present. He pulled out a crumpled piece of paper with a girl's name scribbled on it. "My granddaughter, who is deaf and mute, was also raped, and I need help," he said.

Haugen's group has set an internal goal: by 2017, they want the United States government and multilateral organizations to designate at least a billion dollars annually for fixing justice systems in the developing world. And Haugen wants to make sure that, before these donors decide where to spend their money, they solicit the views of law-enforcement, corrections, and courtroom officials—as well as those individuals who have themselves passed through the justice system.

But, in order to realize his broader ambitions, Haugen will eventually have to widen his appeal. And that may require choosing between his two goals: reforming public justice systems and reforming American Christianity. When Haugen speaks to Christian audiences, he sometimes seems to be suggesting that only Christians have the fortitude to stand strong in the face of cruelty. In "Good News About Injustice," he writes with admiration of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Protestant theologian whom the Nazis executed in 1945 for his involvement in the plot to assassinate Hitler. He notes that Bonhoeffer once wrote, "Who stands fast? Only the man whose final standard is not his reason, his principles, his conscience, his freedom or his virtue, but . . . the responsible man who tries to make his whole life an answer to the question and call of God."

To rally his core Christian constituency, Haugen also uses absolutist language that can cause secular audiences to squirm, especially after eight years of President Bush's moralistic rhetoric. At the December fund-raising dinner, for example, Haugen used the word "evil" twenty-six times. When he discussed slaveowners, traffickers, and other abusers, he declared, "There aren't actually two sides to every story. Sometimes there is just evil—plain, unvarnished, intentional evil."

Haugen knows that it is an awkward time to be an interventionist abroad—and an even worse time to sell a good-and-evil agenda at home. As he put it, "You do find a fatigue around the idea



"I couldn't tell if it was a fable or if it was badly written."

that good Americans can go abroad and help people as a consequence of the Iraq war. That Iraq looked like a disaster creates challenges, to say the least." He used to tell audiences the Parable of the Talents, in which the master berates the servant who buried his talent for fear that he would squander it. Haugen once cited the passage to urge Christians to harness the power they had at their disposal. He told them, "God is not happy if you are too scared to use your power for fear of screwing up." But in the past few years he has had to change scripts: "I can't really give that sermon the same way in the wake of Iraq." That said, Haugen believes that Americans are applying the "lessons of Iraq" too broadly; not all morally inspired action should be tainted by association with Bush's mistakes.

Haugen's apparent unwillingness to alienate supporters of President Bush, who are a key part of his fund-raising efforts at home, means that he rarely makes direct criticisms of the policies of the past eight years. In the December speech, for instance, he used only coded language to distance himself from the Bush Administration and signal his awareness of the risks of pursuing a "battle between good and evil." The language was so coded that I missed the allusion. When I asked

him after the dinner how he could still talk in such starkly absolute terms, he looked puzzled. "But I warned them we all had to be on guard for fairy tales," he said. The next day, he e-mailed me the speech, in which he had indeed said, "We are so used to people trying to manipulate us with false black-and-white moral options that we can be forgiven for not rushing off to join another good-guys-versus-bad-guys fairy tale." Unfortunately, such oblique disclaimers are unlikely to reassure secular activists, on whom system-wide legal reform depends. Larry Cox, of Amnesty International U.S.A., cautioned, "The moralizing language works with Gary's crowd, but his reach will be limited by it."

Long after I left Kenya, I e-mailed Joe Kibugu to ask what had become of the old man who danced in celebration of the prospect of finding justice for his granddaughter. Kibugu wrote back that he had followed up with the man; however, the mission's preliminary investigation found that the authorities had not been willfully slow in prosecuting the case. With regret, Kibugu decided that the mission was too short-staffed to take on a case that wasn't a flagrant injustice. The old man would have to nudge the Kenyan government on his own. ♦

FICTION

SOLDIER'S JOY

BY ANTONYA NELSON



In her dream, her husband had written her a love letter. It closed with the following sentence: *I've looked at myself in the mirror—an admittedly warped and unreliable façade—and been keenly aware of how lucky I am that you still want to live with me.*

"Humble bugger, aren't I?" her husband said when she told him about the dream letter.

"But what about me?" Nana answered. "So self-aggrandizing! So passive-aggressive!"

He rose up on an elbow to blink down at her, his large head and leonine hair eclipsing all else. "I dreamed that some friend of ours, some preposterously impossible person, was pregnant."

"Someone like Helen?"

He agreed: Helen. "I was very impressed, in the dream. It seemed so god-dam optimistic."

"What was I doing, in your dream?"

"You weren't there." He fell back upon his pillow. Mention of Helen, who had been their hostess the previous evening, reminded Nana that she had a phone call to make. It was not an uncommon call; it might not even be necessary with this particular hostess. Yet perhaps that's what Nana had been trying to tell herself in the dream—that her husband *was* lucky to have her. Drunk the night before, he'd made a pass at Helen's nineteen-year-old daughter.

"I hope Rebecca wasn't alarmed," Nana said to Helen on the phone.

"Please. She was flattered, just like anybody." Nana heard the faint sniff of competitiveness, the knotted business between mother and daughter. This vexed tolerance wouldn't have been the response if one of Helen's sons had been kissed on the ear or patted on the fanny by a family friend. As a young girl, Rebecca had been overweight and overly furred, with a mustache, thick arm hair, heavy brows; other children had called her Ape Face. The transformation into confident womanhood had been impressive. Her parents weren't native Texans, but lately they'd been participating in their own version of unveiling the débutante—buying a new wardrobe and bringing her to parties. Nana's husband had been exceedingly complimentary. "My God, you're gorgeous!" he'd declared one evening, genuinely astonished. "Look, everyone, isn't she spectacular?" And there Rebecca had

stood, turning red in her tight-fitting green dress.

"No worries," Helen said. Nana made out the cigarette-lighter flick, the deep, first-of-the-day inhalation. Helen's bad habit made her less likely to judge others'. She and Nana had met in graduate school and ended up in the same city a dozen years later. Nana wasn't sure she would have agreed to move to Houston had Helen not been there. Helen was her best friend, although she suspected that she was not Helen's.

"I was thinking of wearing the poppy dress tonight," Nana said, "unless you were?"

"We should match on purpose. Just to make Libby less bitchy. She'd love to be able to ridicule us. What a generous hostess gift that would be, us in our matching dresses, sizes S and L. She couldn't keep hating us, if we gave her that." Nana was the S—in every way less than Helen, not only physically smaller but with fewer attachments, no children, less money, renter rather than owner.

"I'll wear the poppy dress, and you can decide whether we'll match or not. Will you apologize to Rebecca?"

"She isn't so innocent as you think, Nana. I'm sure she was flirting. Just spreading her wings, testing the water. Et cetera."

Nana closed her eyes, visited the scene, her husband with his arm around Rebecca's bare shoulders, his mouth at her ear, his diving glance into the décolletage, solicitous, drunk, benevolent, happy. He could not resist beautiful women. "Sometimes he sort of oversteps the avuncular role," she said.

"Young girls are teases. You and I were, right?"

Nana and Helen were a generation younger than Nana's husband, their former professor, Dr. Shock; back in graduate school, it hadn't been clear for a while which of them he favored, brash Helen or tagalong sidekick Nana. Nana hung up the phone, thinking about those flirtatious days, knowing that the circumstances hadn't been the same. She and Helen had met her husband when they were all at an apex, his as a certified academic celebrity, theirs as nubile acolytes. Back then, he had been a casual tenant of his attractive, still-young body; now he was a fearfully vain and anxious occupant of an older model. For two recent consecutive years,

he had gone around claiming to be sixty-nine, not even consciously, so averse was he to the number seventy. Now he was seventy-one. Before climbing into bed at night, he would perform his exercises—chin-ups, sit-ups, pushups. "And sometimes throw-ups," he would always cheerfully conclude the list. Of Nana he had the expectation, never put into words yet understood nonetheless, that she would keep herself fit and trim and youthful, and that the effort, like the expectation, would be invisible. To that end, she now fixed herself a viscous muddy sludge in the blender, consumed it, and then pulled on her gear, gathered the dogs and their leashes, and took herself for her morning run, all before Dr. Shock, her husband, the emeritus, rolled out of bed.

"Your mother called," he said without looking up from the *Chronicle*, when she returned. "Hello, fellows," he said to the corgis, who dropped themselves panting at his feet, back legs splayed like chicken drumsticks. He'd sat there and not answered the phone. On the machine was her mother's tentative inquiry into Nana's life. Her parents had not known what to make of her marriage to a man their age; they still, many years later, were perplexed, treating Nana as if she'd suddenly transformed from the girl they'd known into an adult they couldn't fathom. Which was, essentially, the truth. She was an only child, the first on either side of her family to go to college. They could not debate what she'd learned there, or what she'd acquired: a husband who not only was old enough to be her father but was divorced, with two estranged sons who were her age. Never mind her degrees, undergraduate and graduate, a redundant pedigree that appeared to have led her no further than to housewifery, in the end. When her parents visited, they tried not to bother anybody, inhabiting the guest room like ghosts, treading lightly. They brought her news of her old neighborhood in Wichita, and of their ailing siblings, and a box of waxy chocolates from the local candymaker. They sat working not to wince as they sipped the wine that Nana's husband insisted on serving them, an expensive bottle, always perfect with whatever meal they would politely eat but not enjoy, a recipe that Nana had chosen from a gourmet magazine and that was, she would realize as soon as she

was in their presence, far removed from their modest tastes. They wanted sweet tea and cream gravy. They wanted grandchildren.

Her husband, the professor, had assumed that he'd be able to expand his in-laws' horizons. He had been confident that he would seduce them, as he was famous for doing with students and colleagues, by means of generosity, immodesty, flamboyant declarations, sodden affection. But although Nana's parents were nothing but gracious to him, they were never going to fall under his spell.

"Daddy's had an accident," Nana's mother told her when she called her back. Her father had lost control of his car, driven onto a sidewalk and into an outdoor café. Nana hadn't even known that Wichita had outdoor cafés, and, fortunately, the place wasn't popular enough for there to have been anyone sitting at the tables he'd crashed through. Her father had been injured, though, and then cited, requiring, first, surgery and, next, perhaps, a lawyer.

He came onto the phone now, clearing his throat, speaking weakly from his hospital bed. "Nana, honey, could you come help Mom?" And within the hour Nana was behind the wheel of her car, headed from Houston to Kansas, Dr. Shock left behind to hold down the fort: care for the dogs and make an appearance at Libby's dinner party.

When she spoke with her husband, the next day, he dismissed her question about the party. "Dull," he declared. This meant one of several things. Least likely was that the evening was actually dull; more plausible was that he'd got too drunk to recall events in a narrative worth retelling; most probable was that he'd done something he could remember very well and did not wish to discuss. Nana sighed, wondering if she should phone Libby to give a generic apology, then decided to consult with Helen first, and discover what it was that her husband wasn't saying.

"Was Helen wearing her poppy dress?" Nana asked.

He paused before responding. "I don't recall." This was a lie, Nana could tell. But why lie about something so trivial as that?

"Was Rebecca there?"

"Yes," he said. "Her dress was black, in case you're wondering. A little black dress." The dogs began to bark then. Nana guessed that her husband had incited their racket, just to give him a good reason to hang up. It was easy to work them into such a state. You had merely to lead them to the plate-glass porch door and point out a squirrel or a cat running on the railing, or the automatic pool vacuum flipping its tail in the water as it carried on, side to side, end to end. They were brothers, two and a half years old. Lacking children, Nana and her husband had settled for dogs; their friends no doubt joked about their misplaced affection. This was the third pair of siblings they'd owned, first black Labs, next cocker spaniels, now the corgis—each set a slightly smaller breed. "We'll die with Chihuahuas," Nana had once told her husband. "You'll die with Chihuahuas," he had corrected her. "I'll die during the dachshunds." In the past, he had enjoyed pointing out the discrepancy in their ages. He didn't do that anymore. "The lads are protesting," he now said faintly into the phone. "I'll call you later."

Nana's mother asked about the dogs before she did her son-in-law. And how she struggled to call a man her own age her "son-in-law." The title begged to be inflected with irony, and Nana's mother wasn't capable of irony.

"All well?" she said cheerfully, disallowing any answer other than an affirmative. She was rooting in her purse for lipstick, preparing herself for the morning's trip to the hospital. Nana had arrived too late to visit her father the night before.

"Whose shoes are those?" Nana asked as they headed out, noticing for the first time an array of children's footwear—snow boots, flip-flops, plastic high heels—by her parents' back door.

"Didn't I tell you who moved into the Dixons' old place?"

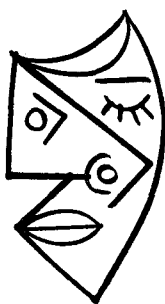
"Remind me," Nana said.

Peter Hinshaw. Nana's first boyfriend. Who now had a wife, and two children. He'd come to the open house only because he'd mistaken the address, thought it was Nana's home on the market. On a bored Sunday whim,

he'd brought his wife and son and daughter, expecting to revisit the rooms where he'd first had sex, first got drunk, first dropped acid, but, instead, had found himself in the house next door, and his wife, untutored in any kind of context, had fallen in love.

Pete's wife had fallen for her new neighbors, Nana's parents, as well. Her children had become their surrogate grandkids, running through the drive and yard that connected the properties, charging up the back steps, kicking off their shoes, and entering Nana's kitchen as if it were their own. They called Nana's parents by their first names, Bud and Lil. They had favorite places around the house, stations that they visited: the piano with its glass dish of meltaway mints; the base of the dining-room table, where a town of blocks and thimbles was set up; a giant jar of change in the sewing room, too heavy to lift but lovely to study; and the aquarium full of fish, into whose gawping mouths they took turns dropping the minutest bits of food. Nana's mother's joy in these children, her father's reputed amused lenience, stung Nana. Nothing she could do would transport her parents in quite the same way. Indulging these two small people, ages three and five, was as much as they could ever wish for.

Nana and her mother came home from the hospital to find the children waiting on the back steps. With their pink skin and blond mops, they did not resemble their father. Peter's skin had always been sallow, his hair a dark kinky mess, his eyes sunk in gloomy sockets. These drug-addict, rock-star features had attracted Nana in high school. She was not immune to their appeal now. Pete had broken up with her to date a college girl, trading up. Nana hadn't held this against him, although for a long while she had suffered—suffered as if kicked in the ribs by a horse, in tremendous pain but with no real hostility toward the animal itself. It was perhaps that college girl, all those years ago, whose allure had convinced Nana that she absolutely had to attend college herself. And a better one than the local U. She would be a coed from a school with a national reputation. She would show Peter Hinshaw. In fact, her eventual marriage to her professor could very well have been the fruition of that seed sown by Peter.



"Hey, Pete," she greeted him, when he slouched into her parents' house to retrieve his children. She wished that he had lost hair and gained weight; instead, he looked as she remembered him, which is to say that she felt herself attuned to him, to everything about him, once again. She knew what those lips felt like, that coiled hair; she remembered the odor of breath mint, smoke, beer when he kissed her on the cheek. Still indulging and hiding his vices. The badly shaved rough neck.

"Ba-Nana," he said drolly, not bothering to disguise his lazy leering scan, dragged from foot to head like the amplified snarl of a guitar riff. From the hallway came the commotion of his children, the little boy and girl running headlong into the room then, suddenly silenced—brought up short—by his presence. It was as if he beat them. Except that he wouldn't beat them. He would embarrass them. He would make them self-conscious. He would not laugh at what wasn't amusing, or praise indiscriminately, out of politeness. He was finicky, and frank, and relentless. "Intense," everyone had agreed uneasily, in high school; it had been a coup to be his girlfriend, to pass his peculiar muster.

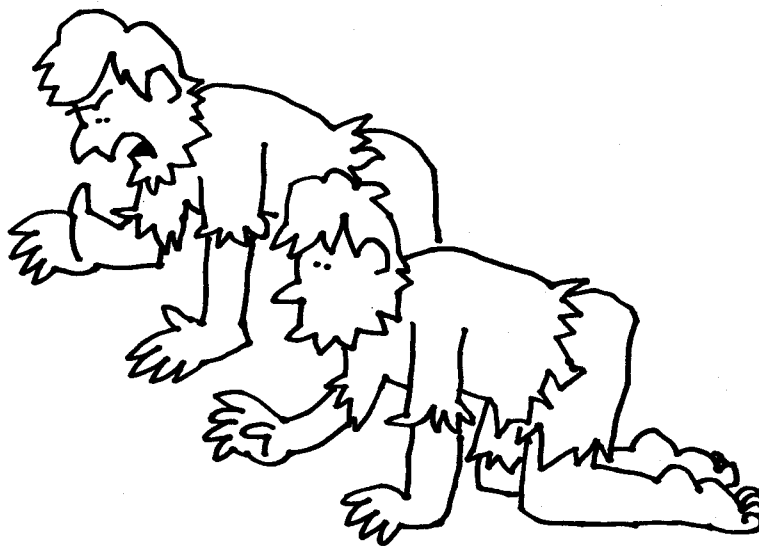
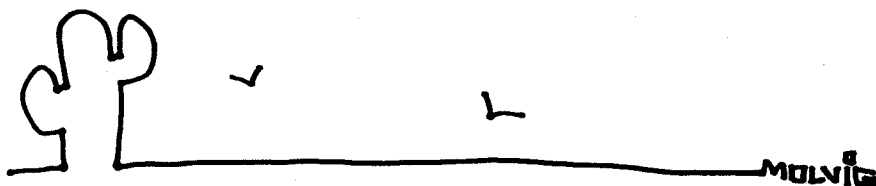
"What are you no-necks up to?" he asked the girl, turning in her direction without releasing Nana from his glance.

"Playing," she said shyly, edging behind Nana's mother's knees.

"Playing," her brother echoed, a plea. In his hand he held an unravelling cardboard tube from gift wrap; they'd been charging around the house, sword fighting.

"Peter," Nana's mother said, ecstatic as hostess, mother, ersatz grandmother, queen of the castle, bestower of cardboard swords. "Sit down. Say hello to Nana. She's come to help." Her mother had no idea what had happened in her house, all those years ago. The blow-outs in the basement, the escapades in Nana's bedroom, the hidden niches where the bottles and pills and baggies had been stashed—her own little stations, Nana thought. Her parents had been notoriously oblivious.

The woman's innocence, compounded by the children's, returned them to high school, Peter and Nana



"And you can forget about a decent bagel."

staring at each other through the whirl of sweetness that ensued: bright-pink juice being drunk and spilled, cookies offered and crumbled, sugar suffusing the atmosphere, while across the table, across years and other partners, a snaking heat coalesced between them, something engineered out of naughtiness and nostalgia, the knowledge of a shared history, wavering there like a faint layer of pollution.

Which would be thoroughly whisked away by the arrival of the wife. She wasn't the cool coed from back when. He'd married a physical therapist, an upbeat, wide-faced young woman, a leader of cheers. She, like her children, entered Nana's old home as if its inhabitants were her close relations; it was a confidence that had to do with good intentions, purity. "Honey, I'm so sorry about Bud" were her first words to Nana's mother. "I took him a can of cashews and a puzzle book. Pete, you know you have messages on the machine?"

"Unemployed," Pete explained to Nana. "Downsized."

"Taking stock, sweetheart," the wife scolded. "Weighing other options."

Pete's wife held out her hand to shake Nana's. "I would recognize you anywhere! All those pictures in the albums." Her smile made her eyes wrinkle atop her apple-round cheeks. She was so unlikely, Nana thought, though perhaps Pete needed such a girl to keep him in line—to provide cover for him by making small talk, uttering pleasantries. A person person, as opposed to a misanthrope. To her every address she appended a term of endearment: *sweetness, monkey, pie-pie*. Her children scooted onto chairs beside her as she sat at the table, each leaning close to her radiant good will.

But what did he offer her? Martyrdom?

"Come see my tree house?" Pete said to Nana.

"It was our tree house," the little girl said, "but Daddy took it."

"Our tree house," the boy repeated sadly.

Pete stood, patting the shirt pocket over his heart, where a hard-pack of

Camels showed itself. "I'll check the messages," he told his wife. "Bye, Lil. Coming?" he asked Nana.

Nana's husband wanted to hear all about her ex-boyfriend.

"Why didn't you answer, before?" Nana asked. She imagined him ignoring the ringing phone, humming boredly right beside the machine as she left her messages. It was nearly midnight, and she was up on the porch roof, beneath the tree limbs, looking down at the Dixons' old house. Pete's house. Faint pink night-lights lit the upstairs hall; in the basement, another light was on, this of the bare-bulb variety. Nana guessed that Pete was under that bulb, either there or in his tree house, designed for the children, co-opted by him. He'd led her up its circular metal stairway treads, into its boys'-club confines. First he'd got her stoned, then he'd leaned over to put his lips on hers.

The night had turned brisk, as it always did just before Halloween; a wind had whipped up, and what few leaves were left in the trees slapped against the porch roof, switched at Nana's legs. Her mother would have been horrified to find her there, imperilled on the roof, as she had been in the old days. Would Nana never cease scaring that poor woman?

Meanwhile, Nana's husband was drinking. "The old soldier's joy," he in-

formed her jauntily. He would be snug in his reading chair in their Houston study, paging through weighty art books. He couldn't concentrate on words in this state but enjoyed falling into the large color plates of these expensive volumes. His Rauschenbergs, his de Koonings, his Twomblys, and, saddest of all, his Rothkos. In this abstract mood ("This is when I relish visions of suicide," he'd told her once), he tonight discerned something about her commentary, peeled back her father's (stable) condition, her mother's (chatty) busyness, to inquire into the neighbor, the former boyfriend, the surprise, the narrative aside. Underpainting, Nana thought, the hidden figures beneath the public subject. He could perceive it anywhere.

"Tell me about the reunion with the boyfriend," her husband said. "Spare no detail. A hug?"

"Uh-huh."

"Peck on the cheek? Kiss? Lingering glance?"

Nana heard his longing to have her say that they had fooled around. He wanted to be titillated by the situation, turned on by the scenario, have a little phone-sex intermission before returning to his art books. He liked it when men flirted with Nana, when they stood too close or stared overlong, tucked in her dress tag or brushed against her. And, in

the past, Nana had exaggerated these incidents, especially while making love with her husband, so that he could feel like the winner, so that she could feel like the prize. He made use of it as foreplay; also, he seemed to think that it excused his own lecherous tendencies. But now that his inquiry might lead to something true, Nana found it difficult to remember how she usually played the game. "You sound like you *want* me to sleep with him," she said eventually.

"Do I?"

"You do."

"Maybe I do. If you did, would you tell me about it?"

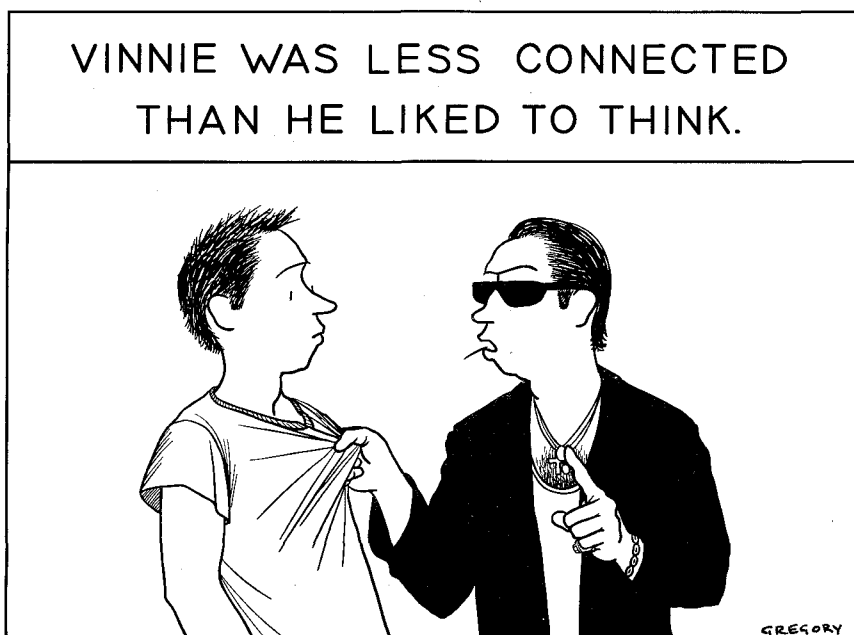
"I don't want to sleep with him," she lied. "We already did that, a long time ago."

"Therefore, if you slept with him again, your over-all stats wouldn't change." Her "stats" were known to her husband. A mere handful. Nana had been timid. His number of partners was much higher, higher even than might be expected, given his twenty-plus-year head start. He couldn't remember all their names, those many women with whom he'd had sex.

"The stats would change." She had never been unfaithful, had never wanted to be unfaithful.

"Nana," he said, laughing. He was so confident, she thought, so sure that she still felt herself the lucky object of the esteemed professor's attention. In her mind, she opened the drawer of his night table, just to be appalled by the number of pill bottles there, the dirty secret of his decline. At that moment, the side door at the Dixons' clattered open; it was Pete emerging. He didn't let the storm door rattle shut behind him, but held it on its wheezing hydraulic arm, then simply sat on his side steps and lit a cigarette. Nana watched him from her perch.

"Sh-h-h," she whispered to her husband, without thinking.



"Listen, you little punk—I know a guy who knows a guy who knows a lady whose aunt lives next to a guy who cleans the pool of a guy who could have your legs broken."

They made love in her bedroom, on the bed where they'd first made love, when they were sixteen years old. Their bodies loved each other, she thought; they remembered—they knew what to do when put together. Outside, the sky was tin-can gray, a depressing light that softened Nana's embarrassment. Yet, naked, there was no longer awkwardness between them; his suit of flesh, unlike

her husband's, did not hang loose upon a discernible skeleton. His mouth tasted of marijuana, his body temperature seemed to be precisely the same as hers, his arrangement of limbs designed to perfectly match hers, so that embracing him was like entering a dream, like falling under a spell. They moved with the familiarity of instinct, and when they rolled over, still attached, it reminded Nana of her dogs at play, harmonious intimacy. Was she really comparing them to animals? For-saking words, or articulate thought at all? Was that a way to disclaim the significance of what passed between them? In fact, mightn't she find it all the more profound for that reason?

She wanted to say that she loved him—because she loved what had just happened, because she loved the strange intoxicant they had recovered and shared—but only a fool made that claim first.

"Last time we used a rubber," he eventually said, a half-smile on his contemptuous lips. Nana hadn't even thought about protection, proof of her innocence.

"Last time it moved along a little faster." She was trying to match his nonchalance, but nothing could have been further from the truth of how she felt.

They heard her mother arrive home downstairs. Nana had claimed a headache that morning, watching from her window as, first, her neighbors took themselves away, the mom in the car with the boy and the girl in the back, waving to Pete in his sweatpants on the porch. He'd raised his eyes from their car as it pulled down the drive, seeing Nana through the glass. Not long after her mother had also driven away, he had rapped on the back door. She'd opened it and then had not moved out of the way, forcing him, if he planned to come in, to step up and into her arms. They hardly spoke as they wandered the familiar path from kitchen to dining room, then upstairs and down the hall to Nana's girlhood room. "Haven't been up here lately," he murmured as she shut the door and latched the hook and eye that she'd screwed into the woodwork years ago.

Later, they'd listened as her mother made her slow way along the same route, then knocked on the bedroom door. Nana finally registered some-

thing of what she'd expected: guilt, shame, delinquency. Till that moment, she'd been operating in a sort of fog, acting on the hazy excited intuition of what felt good and of the merciful absence of her mind. She called out that she'd be right down.

"Daddy's coming home this afternoon," her mother said through the door. "Maybe you could pick him up while I fix supper?"

Pete was sitting on the edge of the bed by then, still naked, like an athlete on the bench, after a game, revving, yet worn out. He turned and gave her a devilish grin. "Sure," Nana called.

"Daddy," he mouthed. "Supper."

She laid her head on Pete's back, on the soft top knobs of his spinal column, where his hair reached her cheek. Again, she wished to say that she loved him—not because she was sure she loved him but because it was such a perfectly insular sentence. No one knew that they were here, together. She wished never to leave this instant, its singularity and repleteness.

"Keep her in the kitchen," he said into Nana's ear. "I'll go out the front."

Her father reclined across the back seat, pain medication making his sentences syrupy, his bare toes at the end of a heavy full-leg cast resting on the door handle. Without meaning to, he'd lowered the back window. The air was wet and cool, and Nana cracked her own window. The chill felt good; it cleared the odor of antiseptic and plaster from the vehicle. Her husband was only four years younger than this man. Of course she had always known that. It was because her father was sedated and prostrate, because he hadn't bothered to put on his eyeglasses, that his age and vulnerability, and by extension her husband's age and vulnerability, now suddenly upset her.

And also because of Pete, because making love with him had left her younger.

"Mom's fixing meat loaf," she announced, over-loud.

"Mom," he said, the only word he'd ever need; it would be his last, she thought.

For the rest of the ride, Nana let her-

self fall into a full flashback of sex with Pete. In the windy car, it warmed her like a glowing pilot light, steady, ready to flare into action.

On the phone to her husband, she lied, claiming that her father wasn't home yet. She was sitting on the roof again, as a cold dusk settled, the sky tinged green. "They're worried about infection," she said. "He still has a fever.

And diarrhea," she added, for the verity that only a non sequitur could provide.

"And how's the boyfriend? That good neighbor?"

"Pete?" She looked down automatically, to the places he might occupy, and felt a faint ignition in her chest.

"Peter, the boy next door, that one. How's the reunion shaping up? Nothing like a rekindled romance, in my experience."

"What do you mean?"

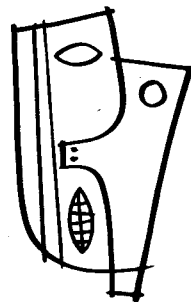
"I mean I fucked Deborah, a few years after the divorce, and it was terrific. Much better than when we were married, light-years better, like strangers, like Anaïs Nin characters. Ahh," he sighed happily, for a moment off in memory somewhere, then back. "Of course, that was long before I met you. Now, tell me about Peter."

Pete, Nana corrected, as if cradling his warm head in her palm. "I don't like that word," she said.

"You use it all the time."

"Not as a verb." She hadn't fucked anybody, ever. "He's fine," she said, of Pete, wondering what her husband really hoped to learn. It bothered Nana to hear his self-assured voice, his confession about his ex, which seemed to demand a reciprocal response, tit for tat. It was like a parent trying to coax a lying child into admitting an obnoxious truth. Or maybe it felt like that because that was what it so closely, factually, resembled. "He's pathetic," she plunged ahead. "Unemployed, hanging around like a sullen teen-ager. Even down to the tree house. He'll be lucky if his wife doesn't leave him."

Her husband laughed. "Just like me! Isn't that what I wrote in that letter in your dream?" Then he told her that he had been invited to the Merrills' for dinner, was leaving in a little while. Their friends would take care of him, in Nana's



absence, would rally round to feed and entertain him.

"Stay away from the stemware," she warned. He'd broken many glasses, over time, at the Merrills'. They insisted on serving wine in extremely fine crystal; sometimes he demanded to use a jelly jar, prophylactically. It was a standing joke. Their friends found him charming; he was famous for his passionate arguments, his stormy exits, followed by exorbitant apologies, heartfelt embraces, exquisite handwritten notes. Beloved, he was, flaws and all.

He said one more thing before hanging up: "I don't care if you sleep with him, but you have to tell me. Agreed?"

"I'm not going to sleep with him," Nana said. She closed the cell phone and held it to her throat, shut her eyes, and felt Pete all around her.

Now she debated phoning Helen. One wanted to tell, she realized. After the initial crucial privacy, one wished to speak aloud what had transpired. As an excuse, as an opening gambit, she could ask Helen to keep an eye on her husband's drinking at the Merrills'; also, she could thank Helen for the flowers, which had arrived that afternoon, lurid non-native blossoms that vaguely alarmed Lil. Nana could ask what Helen would be wearing tonight, what had happened at Libby's, two evenings before.

Rebecca answered at Helen's house.

"She's over at your place," the girl said.

"No, I'm in Kansas. My father was in an accident." Nana started to fill in with the information about his hospitalization, when Rebecca cut her off with an exasperated sigh.

"Come on, Nana. Do you really not know what's going on with them? Are you really so totally out of touch?"

"I'm sorry?" Nana's first thought was that Rebecca was drunk or high, that she had regressed to the terrifying adolescence that her parents believed had, thank God, passed.

"It's been, like, *years*," Rebecca went on. "If I know, if my *brothers* know, it just seems impossible that you don't know. Doesn't it?" The girl paused. Nana had pushed herself back to the window that led onto the roof, was beginning to climb inside. Fear had gripped her; she felt as if she might suddenly, after all these years, truly be at risk of falling from her perch.

LEARNING TO READ

If I had to look up every fifth or sixth word,
so what. I looked them up.
I had nowhere important to be.

My father was unavailable, and my mother
looked like she was about to break,
and not into blossom, every time I spoke.

My favorite was the Iliad. True,
I had trouble pronouncing the names,
but when was I going to pronounce them, and

to whom?
My stepfather maybe?
Number one, he could barely speak English;

two, he had sufficient intent
to smirk or knock me down
without any prompting from me.

Loneliness, boredom and terror
my motivation
fiercely fuelled.

I get down on my knees and thank God for them.

Du Fu, the Psalms, Whitman, Rilke.
Life has taught me
to understand books.

—Franz Wright

"O.K., whatever," Rebecca said. "I'll tell her you called."

Nana was out the front door before she realized she'd gone down the stairs. They'd flown beneath her feet, lightly, as if she had floated from second to first floor, noting on her way the purple-and-black flowers from Helen, obscene red stamens lingering on her retina as she left her parents' porch. She went straight to the Dixons' house, stepping up Pete's walkway and to his front, rather than side, door. Her mother did not have a view of the front door from her kitchen window. Her father could not see it from where he was propped before the television in the den. Pete did not immediately ask her in, but stood on the other side of a torn black screen. She must have had a look about her, because his expression grew more guarded. Had she come here to test for that guardedness?

From the kitchen, at the back of the house, came the sound of singing, of children laughing. That was what he was guarding.

"I came to say goodbye," Nana chose to say.

Now he unhooked the door, pushed it open. He hadn't shaved; she longed to bury her face in his rough warm throat. She wished to banish both her husband and Helen, forget Rebecca's no-nonsense voice, and disappear in Pete's embrace. But he turned his back, picked up a beer from the end table next to a chair. Why was he in here, in the dark, instead of in the lighted kitchen? What had he been doing when she rang the bell? Back when he'd found the college girl, when he'd shrugged his helpless farewell to Nana, she'd taken her cue from him, too: she would not show her need.

"Daddy's home?" he asked.

"Daddy's home."

"No complications? Lawsuits?"

She shook her head. "He's fully insured," she said. "Over-insured, maybe."

"Good to be insured," Pete agreed.

When her husband was being courted by the department in Houston, he had been taken out to dinner with the other endowed chairs in the liberal arts. Helen was married to one. Nana's husband had phoned her later, in California, to tell her the news: her old friend, now Mrs. Helen Nolan, was ready to reënter her life, lucky happenstance, a sign. Helen might have been standing beside him in the hotel room even then, pulling earrings out of her ears, or replacing them, lighting a cigarette, pre- or post-coital.

Nana could not say which of these people, her husband or her best friend, was the most responsible for the pain she felt now, that kicked-in-the-ribs sensation.

"Beer?" Pete finally said, glancing reluctantly toward the noisy kitchen, where the beer was apparently kept.

"Do you think I should stay here?" she asked, and, when he scowled, as if she meant his living room, added, "In Wichita, I mean? Should I stay with them for a while?"

"I don't know. They'd be happy." He fell back into his chair, looked at the ceiling. He could be cold, she remembered; it was all coming back to her. When she began crying, he jumped up and hustled her out the front door. "This way," he said, not waiting for her to agree, but leading her around the drive, to the back, to his tree house, where he lit the gas heater. "Don't tell the codes people," he said, "but this is an illegal appliance." The small space filled with the odor of both the gas and the struck match. They sat on the floor beside each other, knees touching. Nana put her hand on his, and he removed it. "No," he said. "That would be a mistake."

Why? she wanted to wail. Why aren't I enough? For anyone, it seemed?

Instead, he reached for the hookah.

"Mr. Dixon died in your basement," Nana told him.

"Yeah," Pete said as he slowly exhaled. "It's got that aura." From the tree house they could see both kitchens below, his and hers, figures moving in the lighted windows. Nana took her

turn with the hookah, inhaled, felt the blue glow enter her. She and Pete had first kissed at a party in the country, sitting around a fire, smoking pot. They hadn't said much, just leaned away from the group and into each other. Now Pete held a lighter to the bowl, circling it expertly with the flame.

"You'd rather get high than kiss," she said. "Or make love."

He looked up, his eyes reflecting the lighter's yellow flame. "Or anything," he said. The hashish had calmed him, made him the beautiful boy he'd been. She nodded, hoping that she looked to him like the girl she'd been.

She came home red-eyed, her shoes filthy with mud from the yard between their houses. She slipped them off at the back door, left them with the children's shoes there.

Her father had somehow ambulated in from the den, and was arranged sideways at the kitchen table, his bright-white cast propped on a second chair. Her mother fussed between stove and table, narrating happily, like a twittering bird. As usual, her parents were oblivious of the redness of Nana's eyes, of the odor she had surely brought with her. On the table, meat loaf. Milk. Soft bread and margarine. Nana fell into her chair as if she'd been pushed.

It was so exhausting to consider, the whole past that she would now have to revisit and amend, unstitch and patch back together, her husband and her friend Helen, from graduate-school days to the current moment. Right now those two would be sitting under the twinkling lights and the elaborate bug zappers in the Merrills' courtyard sculpture garden, passing appetizers, discussing art and politics, staring at each other over the rims of fine stemware.

"Just in time!" her mother said, hovering above the food, filling three plates, then settling in her customary seat.

"Thanks, Mom," Nana's father said.

"We're so glad to have you here," Nana's mother said to her. "I was telling Dad, even in these crazy circumstances, it's awfully nice."

Concentrating hard through the foggy effects of Pete's hashish, Nana picked up her fork and faced this simple meal. It was very difficult, as if she were starting all the way back at the beginning. ♦

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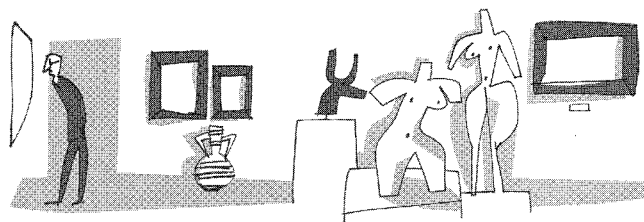
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THE CRITICS



THE CURRENT CINEMA

CHE'S WAY

Scenes from a revolution.

BY ANTHONY LANE

The new Steven Soderbergh film, "Che," begins with a pair of boots. More than four hours later, that is pretty much how it ends, too. The first boots belong to Che Guevara (Benicio Del Toro), who is wearing them, together with his trademark combat fatigues, while being interviewed in Havana, in 1964. He wears the same outfit later that year, in New York, as a way of indicating, to the United Nations and to any *bien-pensants* who can gaze at him without drooling, that even in this city of chatter he remains an undaunted man of action. The second pair of boots, by contrast, is the last thing he sees, as he dies on the floor of a Bolivian hut; they belong to the officer who has come to check that Che, caught and shot, has finally given up his troublesome ghost. The visual echo is a fitting one, since, whatever the private impulses that fired this work, there is no doubting Soderbergh's desire to shoot at ground level—not to linger on the loftiness of political ideals but, instead, to get down amid the dirt, sweat, and despair of putting them into practice.

The movie is actually two movies, excitingly titled "Part One" and "Part Two." They had a brief run at the tail end of last year, to qualify for Oscar nominations; now, at their leisure, they are enjoying a wider release, and, for that full revolutionary flavor, I would recommend seeing them back to back, with a pit stop for a mojito in between. As to whether we

really need two movies, well, Eisenstein used the same scheme for "Ivan the Terrible" (there was a third, which he barely started), and it seems only fair that Che the Implacable, who packed a good deal into less than forty years on earth, should receive a similar treatment. Mind you, anybody who goes to a double bill of "Che" expecting a handsome survey of his life, as I did, will be surprised by what's not there. Nothing about the budding of his radical beliefs, which was rather too lovingly captured by Walter Salles in "The Motorcycle Diaries" (2004), starring Gael García Bernal as an improbably gorgeous Che. Nothing of the rebels' entry into Havana, in early 1959, with Che at their head and Batista, the cowardly tyrant, already fled; "Che, Part One," teasingly, is a *triumphus interruptus*, halting just short of this spasm of joy. Nothing of Che's own tyrannical tendencies, as witnessed by the hundreds executed under his auspices during the revolutionary tribunals, or of his calamitous period as president of Cuba's National Bank. And only a whisper of his entanglement in the Congo, in 1965, which he himself described as "a failure," and which somebody—Werner Herzog, perhaps—might care to dramatize in a future film, although its Conradian futility might be hard to take.

So what are we left with? Two separate stories, in essence, with occasional trimmings. "Part One" begins by hopping across three locations in as many minutes: Cuba, in 1964; newsreel foot-

age of Batista's seizure of power there, in 1952; and Mexico City, in 1955, when Fidel Castro first meets Che and discusses an armed overthrow of the Batista regime. After that, things settle down, and the bulk of the story, apart from occasional flash-forwards (in granular black-and-white) to the American trip, covers the training and the deployment of guerrilla forces in Cuba, where Che arrived in 1956. The guerrillas start in the Sierra Maestra mountains and wind up assaulting the town of Santa Clara, in the middle of the island, wresting it from government control. "Part Two" gives no more than a backward glance at Cuba; the opening passages flow like a spy thriller, as our hero slips from public view and enters quietly—in the guise of a bald, bespectacled badger, having shaved his beard and pate—into Bolivia, where the rest of the tale unfolds. There, in his final effort to foment revolution, he takes one nom de guerre after another; even as Che becomes Ramón, though, and as Ramón becomes Fernando, the legend of Guevara adheres ever more unmistakably to its plinth.

Throughout the films, we are given precise dates onscreen, and the writers, Peter Buchman and Benjamin A. van der Veen, have clearly delved into a wealth of documentary sources; it was news to me that Che smoked an avuncular pipe as often as a sexually smoldering cigar. The over-all effect, however, is at once scrupulous and vague. We are sometimes given information that we don't require, such as the map of South America at the beginning of "Part Two," which helpfully points out places like Chile and Brazil—at best, a nod to Che's vision of the continent as one giant tinderbox, awaiting the spark of insurrection. At other, more crucial times, the information isn't there when we need it. In the second movie, for example, one of Che's lieutenants is told that his brother has been killed in battle, and the scene is signalled as an emotional jolt, yet it passes in such haste that we can scarcely work out who the bereaved man is, let alone the deceased. (By now, after months in the open, the guerrillas are all as hairy as one another; you have to peer through the matting to discover which warrior is which.) Major

Benicio Del Toro plays Che Guevara in Steven Soderbergh's two-part, four-hour film about the guerrilla leader.



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figures come and go, diverting the plot without registering much of an impact; a woman called Tania (Franka Potente) hooks up with Che in Bolivia, and carelessly gives away her identity to the police ("five years of lost work," he says), but nothing in "Che" tells you that she was trained as a German agent, reportedly working for the Russians. I am aware that Marxist doctrine demands that combatants subsume their individual selves in the common cause of defeating imperialism, and that may well be the key to guerrilla warfare, but is it also a helpful way to run a movie?

The principal distinction between the films is one of pace and hue. The first installment proceeds calmly through its jungle greens to the blindingly bright walls of Santa Clara, and violent events, like the derailling of a trainful of soldiers, or the execution of traitors and liars within Che's ranks (he was without compunction, or indeed compassion, in such matters), are choreographed with lucidity and care. The second movie is both more sombre and more jittery, with its thirst-sharpening tones of scrub, sage, and soil, and an overwhelming sensation, from the start, of a cause simply waiting to be lost. (It's like "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," shorn of all glamour and fun.) You cannot instigate popular revolt without the consent of a people, and Soderbergh allots a number of telling scenes to Bolivian farmers and soldiers, their suspicions of a godless foreigner—Guevara was an Argentine by birth, and by now stateless in his appeal—outweighing their hopes of a just society. Set against this are sequences in which Che, who had a medical degree, administers aid to a few isolated sufferers; the thought that his bourgeois profession may have done more practical good, during this last hurrah, than his wild proletarian ardor is an irony, I suspect, in which Soderbergh is more than happy for us to share.

All of which raises the question: why did Soderbergh make these movies? Like Jon Lee Anderson's 1997 biography of Guevara, they show not only a mastery of proliferating detail but a hard-won moral poise. For followers of Guevara, Del Toro's performance will confirm their faith in the Coman-

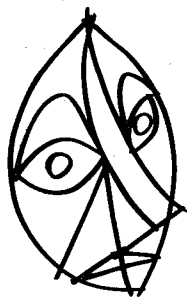
dante—decisive in deed, wheezing with chronic asthma but never complaining, and staunchly bookish (he tells a battle-weary subordinate to stop resting and do his homework). His sympathies for the poor and the maltreated are unstinting to the end. Skeptics, meanwhile, will point to the arc of the twin tale, which leads as if by natural logic from dream to disillusion: look at Che, they will say, standing on a mountain-side and showing his fellow-rebels their destination, which turns out to be a sea of sullen fog. Look at the great liberator, reduced to a slovenly tramp, parked on a village bench, miles from the nearest metropolis, with his pants held together by string. No one should confuse this with hagiography. "We will have become human waste," he tells his colleagues in the Bolivian uplands, later advising one of them "to live as if you've already died."

It's a wonderful line, hinting simultaneously at everyday hopelessness and at a possible grab for immortality, and Soderbergh is smart enough to give both tendencies room. Nonetheless, to forge a long, dispassionate film about a man lit by passion above all else is a curious enterprise; Roberto Rossellini was not far from this, in his bio-pics of Pascal and St. Francis of Assisi, but he was a man with "Stromboli" and "Rome, Open City" to his credit, so his acquaintance with the anatomy of the passions was well attested. But Soderbergh came to "Che, Part One" straight from "Ocean's Thirteen," which is like the Rat Pack turning up in "Reds." It would be comforting, and tidy, to suggest that the director had waited all his life for the chance to make this film, as if it meant everything to him; yet I still have no idea what truly quickens his heart, and at some level, for all the movie's narrative momentum, "Che" retains the air of a study exercise—of an interest brilliantly explored. How else to explain one's total flatness of feeling at the climax of each movie? Nobody around me looked like cheering at the victorious end of "Part One," or suppressed a sob as "Part Two" petered to a close. "He would rather face a soldier than a journalist," somebody says of Guevara. How would he have faced a film director? Hard to say, but I think he would have wanted a fight. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Art Instinct, by Denis Dutton (Bloomsbury; \$25). Dutton, an aesthetic philosopher best known as the curator of the Web site *Arts & Letters Daily*, sets out to do for art what Steven Pinker and others have done for psychology, language, and religion: consider it from a Darwinian standpoint. Along the way, he gives an engaging, if opinionated, survey of various currents in aesthetic debate; it is perhaps unavoidable that he seems on more solid foundations here than in the realm of science. When trying to assess whether artistic impulses should be considered adaptive or merely by-products of the evolutionary process, a crucial question raised by his approach, he argues by analogy and tries to have it both ways. But the book is ultimately animated less by its grand thesis than by all the questions tossed up along the way—why did no art form develop to exploit smell, as music does hearing?—and by Dutton's infectious and wide-ranging love of art, a passion that clearly goes beyond anything that could be considered an adaptive trait.

History's Greatest Heist, by Sean McMeekin (Yale; \$38). After the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks were enmeshed in a civil war and desperate for funds for everything from guns and boots for soldiers to a luxury car for Lenin. In theory, they had at their disposal the riches of the deposed Tsar, including one of the world's great reserves of gold. But the gold was the security for Russia's national debt, and most of Europe didn't recognize the new regime or its right to the treasury anyway; in today's terms, it was a rogue state under heavy sanctions whose assets were effectively frozen. What followed, McMeekin writes, was a "gold-laundering boom," involving art-thieving commissars, double-dealing smugglers, and a surprisingly nefarious cast of Swedes. The Bolsheviks put teams to work prying pearls from centuries-old icons, cracked open private safe-deposit boxes, and even stripped a necklace from



Catherine the Great's tomb. McMeekin's outrage about the crimes occasionally overgilds a good and relevant story, but, given the economic and cultural cost to the Russian people, it is understandable.

Land of Marvels, by Barry Unsworth (Nan A. Talese/Doubleday; \$26). It is 1914, and, after three years in the deserts of Mesopotamia, the British archeologist John Somerville believes he is on the brink of a great discovery. Before he can uncover what he thinks was the residence of the last Assyrian king, Somerville must fight off plans for a railway that will encroach on his dig site, and thwart the efforts of Elliot, a charismatic, straight-talking American (in British historical novels there is rarely any other kind) who is bent on finding oil and on destroying what remains of Somerville's marriage. There is something of E. M. Forster in Unsworth's knowing depiction of a decaying empire run by upper-class incompetents, and in his generous and sympathetic portrayal of women caught between cultures, but he falters in the execution: the plot is that of a thriller, yet the story unfolds at the leisurely pace of a somewhat distracted teatime conversation.

Disquiet, by Julia Leigh (Penguin; \$13). Leigh's first novel was a miracle of compression, a swift, muscular tale of a hunter tracking a near-mythic beast. Here she attempts the same radical economy of language with a more gothic, cluttered story, involving a woman on the run from her abusive husband; two preternaturally knowing children; a rambling French château staffed by giggly twin maids; and a philanderer who acquiesces to his grieving wife's refusal to bury their stillborn baby. Characters are only intermittently identified by name, and every event—a boy hiding behind a curtain, the puncturing of a balloon—is rendered portentous. The result, despite bursts of gorgeously unhinged prose ("suitcases disembowelled," tops of trees like "iron filings drawn starward"), is technically accomplished but airless.

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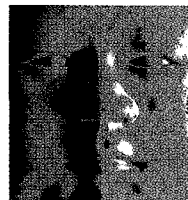
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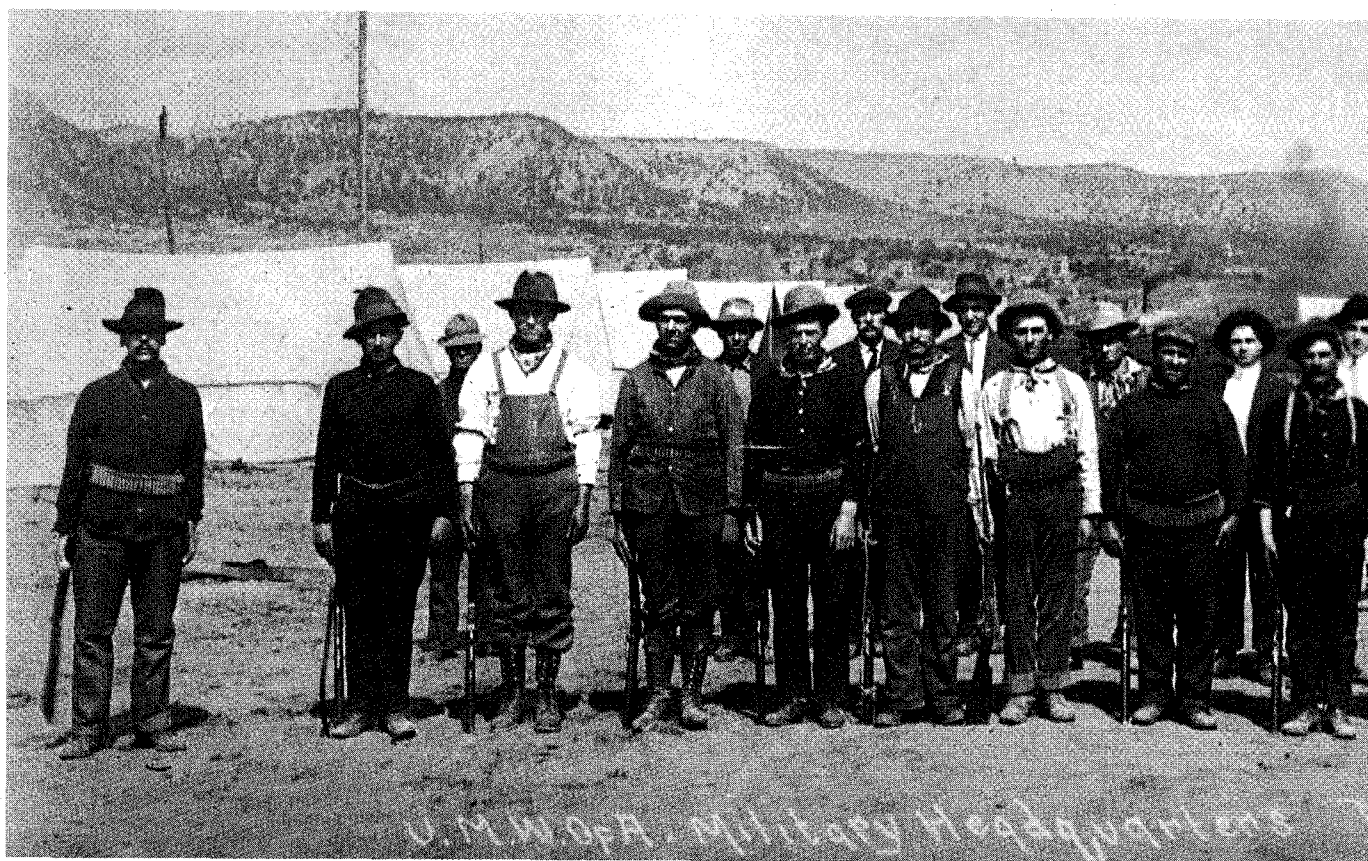
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BOOKS

THERE WAS BLOOD

The Ludlow massacre revisited.

BY CALEB CRAIN

In the spring of 1914, members of the Colorado National Guard machine-gunned and set fire to tents in Ludlow, Colorado, where striking miners were living with their families. Five miners, two miners' wives, and twelve children died, most of them by suffocation while hiding in a cellar under a burning tent. The miners fought back, and, all told, more than seventy-five people were killed in the course of the dispute, roughly as many on the mine owners' side as on the strikers'. In his new book, *"Killing for Coal"* (Harvard; \$29.95), Thomas G. Andrews calls it the deadliest labor struggle in American history.

The earliest histories of the massacre were sponsored by unions, and historians since have followed their lead in seeing it as an episode in the long conflict between capital and labor. "The Bloodstained Lesson" was the title of the final chapter of

George S. McGovern's solid and thoughtful account, co-written with Leonard F. Guttridge and released in 1972, during McGovern's Presidential campaign. In 1982, Zeese Papanikolas memorialized the story of Louis Tikas, a Greek-American union leader killed at Ludlow, in a rhapsodic telling intended as a corrective to the tendency of biographies to focus on public figures. In 2007, in a lively journalistic account, *"Blood Passion"* (Rutgers; \$19.95), Scott Martelle called the strikers "freedom fighters" and said that they "helped crumble an egregious system of political corruption."

Andrews's innovation is to wonder whether "energy systems" might provide a better explanation than ideology. He therefore takes a long view of the story—so long that he goes back to the Cretaceous to explain the formation of coal. Andrews's ac-

count—less moral and more mineral than the standard one—runs something like this: Ancient sun-energy is stored beneath the earth. Because industrial capitalism wants it, the force exerted to draw it out of the ground is high, and, because there is an abundance of unskilled workers, the counterforce that miners are able to apply in their own defense is low. Or so the capitalists calculate from the laws of supply and demand. But it turns out that there is another force to reckon with: the miners' go-for-broke willingness to fight. The capitalists expect a smooth hoovering up of hydrocarbons and workers' rights, but instead violence explodes. People discover, to their dismay, that the desire to exploit an energy resource as cheaply as possible can lead to something like war.

About seventy million years ago, when the Rocky Mountains were still rising out of the sea, coastal swamps covered much of present-day southern Colorado. Ferns and cycads budded, died, and rotted, adding another inch of peat to the swamp floor every forty years or so, until, after a few eons, the peat in some places was hundreds of feet deep. The peat was buried under sediment, and then for millennia it was dried, squeezed, and cooked under-

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ground. At last it became coal, dark and flammable. Twists in the earth shoved some of it back to the surface, and, in 1867, these outcroppings attracted the attention of a survey team planning the route of the Kansas-Pacific Railroad, led by a man named William Jackson Palmer.

At the time, Andrews writes, the people of Colorado were “suffering through nothing short of an energy crisis.” Rivers in the plains were too placid for mill wheels; those in the mountains too violent. Dry, infertile soil limited agriculture, and timber was rare. Palmer saw a way for the state to grow, and for a company to accrue such wealth that “there never would be any strikes or hard feelings among the laborers towards the capitalists.” It didn’t quite work out that way, but Palmer did become the largest coal-mine operator in the region, and soon Colorado was living off coal. It was burned to fire bricks, refine sugar, and bake bread, and it powered engines that pumped water, drove tractors, and ground flour. Coal oil was burned in smudge pots to save peaches from spring frost; coal gas lit the street lamps of Denver, Leadville, Pueblo, and Colorado Springs; and coal-generated electricity lit

more than thirteen thousand bulbs decorating the façade of the Denver Gas & Electric Company’s headquarters. “We cannot exist without it,” Denver’s Chamber of Commerce declared, in 1907. A Denver beekeeper complained of losing eight or nine colonies of bees within a month because flowers were “continually coated with a deposit from the smoke,” but in those days smoke was welcomed as a sign of prosperity, especially by those with the means to move to suburbs upwind. The supply of coal never failed for long in cities like Denver and Pueblo, which were built at railroad junctions, giving them purchasing options. Nonetheless, politicians were careful to keep mine operators happy, and let them get away with land fraud, pollution, unsafe work conditions, and price gouging.

Oddly, in a phenomenon that Andrews calls “the paradox of coal,” one of the few things unchanged by the fossil-fuel revolution was the way that fuel itself was mined. First, a worker undermined a chunk of coal by chipping away at the foot of it with his pick, creating a gap called a kerf. Then he drilled holes, filled them with explosives, and detonated. Finally, he

loaded the coal loosened by the blast onto a car. Except for the explosives, the only energy deployed was the miner’s own. An attempt at mechanization, in 1881, failed; the machines kept breaking down and miners hated them so much that they deserted. For decades, companies simply hired more men. Coal made this easy to do, because it had boosted population and efficiency—so that everywhere there were more people and less work—and had also made travel cheaper than ever before. By the eighteen-nineties, three or four thousand tons of coal could push a steamer across the Atlantic in just six days, and a ticket aboard cost only thirty dollars. Between 1870 and 1910, the non-indigenous population of Colorado grew twentyfold. Unskilled workers from Italy, Greece, Japan, the doddering Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Spanish-speaking New Mexico were hired for their muscles and their willingness to risk their lives. As an individual, a miner was expendable, and, to prevent unionizing, mine operators kept their workforce polyglot. In some Colorado counties, democracy was nearly vestigial. Industrialization was gradually reproducing the conditions of feudalism.

In 1892, Palmer’s company merged with another to become the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company (C.F. & I.), which was run by a former bookkeeper, John C. Osgood. Osgood hated unions, glared at photographers, and spent two and a half million dollars on a Tudor manor complete with a game park. Teddy Roosevelt visited and shot game from the manor’s portico. Soon after taking over, Osgood noticed a revealing difference between so-called open camps, which had public roads and at least a modicum of town government, and closed ones, where miners lived on company property behind a fence that the boss could shut. During a strike in 1894, it became apparent that unions had more success recruiting at open camps. In response, Osgood built his workforce tidy concrete-and-wood houses (from which the disobedient could be evicted on short notice) and started a Sociological Department, which ran kindergartens, a hospital, and night schools, hosted minstrel shows, screened films, and published a weekly magazine. Miners lodged in cottages with pseudo-Swiss façades and shared a club-

Armed miners at the military headquarters of the United Mine Workers, in Trinidad, Colorado, the month of the Ludlow massacre.

house, with a library. At many company stores, prices were competitive, and meat was kept cheap, for the sake of miners' strength.

But the miners weren't grateful. Some persisted in living in open camps, in houses improvised out of adobe or recycled packing crates. They called the company store a "pluck me," because they went into debt there spending scrip, the paper advances against future earnings that the company issued between monthly paydays. A song of the time ran:

Monop'ly keeps grasping
For more and still more;
They will soon own the earth,
Through the company store.

Miners feared the company's power. Those who criticized the company were often sent "down the canyon" (blacklisted) or "kangarooed" (beaten up). On Election Day, the company supervised voting, and when the Republican Party needed a victory one sheriff obliged by counting as voters the heads of passing sheep. "I am king of this county," he once boasted. Whenever a miner died in an accident, the undersheriff asked the mine superintendent whom to put on the coroner's jury. In the decade leading up to the Ludlow massacre, just one mining fatality in Huerfano County was blamed on management, leaving payments to widows and orphans in the other eighty-nine cases to the company's discretion.

It was only in the mine itself that miners found a measure of autonomy. Underground, a mine was laid out in a grid, like a Western town, and, along the side streets, miners were given "rooms." Paid by the ton, miners rarely saw their bosses underground. They owned their tools and chose their hours. As they picked, drilled, and blasted, they saw in the coal around them imprints of shells and seaweed and fossils of palms and breadfruit trees. "The miners' craft," Andrews writes, "thus bound its practitioners to a past when the dark seams in which they toiled had been teeming swamplands." The work was dangerous. Explosions made headlines, but falling rocks killed more miners, who could also be poisoned by underground gases, which they variously named stinkdamp, blackdamp, firedamp, and afterdamp. For their protection, Colorado miners sometimes made pets of mice, who were sensitive to vibrations and fumes before humans were able to notice them. Still, mining deaths in

Colorado were twice the national average. The cause was partly political—the state mine inspector's office was understaffed—and partly geological: the Rockies, in their chaotic rising, had left fractures in rock strata, which increased the chance of a roof collapse underground. Furthermore, at Colorado's high elevation, the air was drier and therefore more conducive to spontaneous coal-dust explosions.

In Colorado, if a boss put a miner in a spot encumbered with rock, the miner had to cart it away at his own expense. If a ceiling looked unstable, he had to timber it, and his only payment was his own improved safety. "All such work was called 'dead-work,'" Upton Sinclair explained in his 1917 novel, "King Coal," "and it was the cause of unceasing war." Another point of contention was the weighing of a miner's car. The scales were widely believed to be rigged, but operators often refused to allow checkweighmen, so a miner had to depend on the company's good faith. Nonetheless, the miner's independence, however notional, was precious to him. "Each day I worked I learned something," an old-timer recalled in an early-twentieth-century interview. "I learned to tell the boss to kiss it."

A spell of incautious spending at the turn of the century left C.F. & I. unable to pay bills and vulnerable to takeover. In 1902, the New York investor John D. Rockefeller, Sr., bought six million dollars' worth of its stocks and bonds. In 1903, he bought a little more and accepted Osgood's resignation.

In 1907, to stanch C.F. & I.'s losses, Rockefeller assigned it a minder. LaMont M. Bowers was old school; he scorned "muckrakers, labor disturbers and the milk and water preachers and professors." Upon arrival in Colorado, he shortened lunch breaks in the office, pruned the Sociological Department until miners' living standards fell, and even reduced bribes to politicians. The company turned profitable. In 1910, when an explosion killed seventy-nine miners and the Colorado Bureau of Labor Statistics accused C.F. & I. of "cold-blooded barbarism" in its neglect of safety measures, Bowers assured his superiors in New York that the miners would soon "get over the excitement." In reply, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to whom his aging father was ceding control, merely asked why C.F. & I. wasn't growing faster. The

younger Rockefeller had recently resigned from the board of Standard Oil to devote his energy to philanthropy. He was particularly concerned about fallen women.

In 1913, the United Mine Workers, a national union, decided to organize in southern Colorado. They expected a fight, and recruited surreptitiously. To undercut the union's appeal, C.F. & I. raised pay ten per cent, started making payments twice a month, abolished scrip, limited the workday to eight hours, agreed to allow checkweighmen, and promised never again to force anyone to shop at the company store. "This keeps them in line and reasonably happy," Bowers wrote to New York, in justification of his generosity. Rockefeller was later to claim that these concessions proved how humane his company had been, but most were requirements under Colorado state law. With less publicity, C.F. & I. hired the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency, a firm whose agents had recently turned a machine gun on striking miners in West Virginia. More than three hundred Baldwin-Felts agents were quickly named sheriff's deputies. The union responded by having its organizers commissioned as game wardens, so that they, too, would be armed if the government suspended the right of ordinary citizens to carry guns.

In September, the prominent campaigner Mother Jones warned miners, "If you are too cowardly to fight there are enough women in this country to come in and beat the hell out of you." Adapting the Civil War song "Battle Cry of Freedom," the union members sang "We're Coming, Colorado"—

The union forever, hurrah, boys, hurrah!
Down with the Baldwins, up with the law;
For we're coming, Colorado, we're coming all the way,
Shouting the battle cry of union

—and voted to strike. A week later, in near-freezing rain, miners collected their tools and left the closed camps for land rented by the union, which had promised to provide tents, many of which had not yet arrived. Sanitation trenches were dug, and wooden floors were laid down. The largest colony, near a railroad depot in Ludlow, housed about twelve hundred miners and family members. It was nicknamed White City, for the color of its tents and in homage to the white buildings at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, and it even had a base-

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ball diamond. To supplement the groceries they were able to buy on their modest union benefit, strikers fished, hunted rabbits, and kept chickens. A former boxer named John R. Lawson led the strike, and the Ludlow camp's unofficial mayor was Louis Tikas, who had run a coffeehouse in Denver and as a boy in Crete had trained cats and birds to play together peacefully.

Even before the strike, union men and detectives had begun shooting at each other. Local hardware stores sold out of guns, ammunition, and dynamite. A union organizer ordered rifles wholesale. The detectives imported machine guns from West Virginia and mounted one on a car armored with plates of steel, which strikers dubbed the Death Special. The coal companies called for the National Guard to intervene, no doubt expecting the guardsmen to break the strike, but the governor, a former rancher, had been elected with labor support, and he hesitated, not least because the state was out of money. At the end of October, a few miners and a few mine guards died in a burst of skirmishing, much of it led, on the mine operators' side, by Karl Linderfelt, a sometime National Guardsman who already considered himself mobilized. After the strikers forced him to retreat, Linderfelt telegraphed to Denver, "The only solution is troops." The governor gave in.

Linderfelt, one of the catalysts of the Ludlow tragedy, is a mysterious figure. Martelle reports that he grew up in Milwaukee, where his father taught classics, wrote a book on the Esperanto-like universal language Volapük, and was caught embezzling from the city library. After his father fled to Paris, Linderfelt dropped out of prep school, turned gold miner, and fought in the Philippine-American War, where he and others in the militia may have acquired a taste for torture and mutilation. (The war, in McGovern's judgment, "may have been Vietnam's closest parallel in U.S. military history.") Such a taste might explain some of the offenses Linderfelt and his men committed in Colorado. On one occasion, they lined a group of strikers up against a wall and told them they were going to face a firing squad. Another time, when an officer's horse tripped on a piece of barbed wire, Linderfelt struck a boy who happened to be nearby and shouted, "I am Jesus Christ, and all these men on horses are Jesus Christ and we have got to be obeyed." Other militiamen

ordered strikers to dig what they told them were their own graves and invited them to write farewell letters to their families. A sick man was kept in a cold cell for three weeks—he died soon afterward—and a wounded one was so deprived of sleep that he told his guard, "I feel lots better take me out and shoot me."

Once the National Guard was deployed, its general claimed the power of martial law, holding prisoners incommunicado, setting up a military commission to review detentions, and threatening to jail a local district attorney if he interfered. According to Papanikolas, one union organizer took advantage of his indefinite incarceration to read "The Pickwick Papers," "The Three Musketeers," and "Les Misérables." Mother Jones took advantage of hers to win publicity, and, when a thousand women protested her detention by marching through the city of Trinidad, the general, who in peacetime served Denver as an ophthalmologist, panicked. On horseback, he kicked a sixteen-year-old girl; then he fell off his mount and in revenge cried out, "Ride down the women!"—an order that led his cavalry to slash with sabres at a square full of women. One was cut on the face, another on her hands, and a third had an ear partly severed.

The militiamen, meanwhile, weren't being paid, because the state auditor sympathized with the union and was holding up funds. As a result, citizen volunteers began to be replaced in the militia by guards and detectives salaried by the mine operators. Though the Colorado National Guard had at first been welcomed by the strikers and even played baseball with them, the militiamen gradually sided more and more openly with the mine operators. A final break came in March, 1914. The corpse of a strikebreaker—either a victim of bludgeoning or a drunk who fell on the railroad tracks, depending on who was asked—was found near the tent colony of Forbes, and guardsmen arrested the Forbes men and tore the tents down. Despite the mounting violence, mine operators refused even to meet with union representatives, and Congress summoned the younger Rockefeller to Washington to explain the impasse. Rockefeller testified that the miners were striking against their will, coerced by outside agitators, and that his company was fighting for the workers' freedom. "And you would do that if that costs

all your property and kills all your employees?" a congressman asked. "It is a great principle," Rockefeller replied.

While Congress was asking questions, southern Colorado grew deceptively peaceful, and by mid-April the governor had withdrawn all but two National Guard companies, one of which was Linderfelt's.

On the morning of April 20th, the day after Orthodox Easter, four guardsmen interrupted Louis Tikas as he was looking at photo postcards in the tent of Pearl Jolly, a married woman he may have been romancing. The soldiers had heard that a man was being held in the Ludlow colony against his will. Tikas irritably denied the charge but agreed to walk to the depot to talk it over. Put on guard by Tikas's prickliness, the officer in command there ordered a machine gun to the top of a hill that overlooked the tents. Some men from the camp saw the gun and saw horsemen galloping between the hill and the depot, took their rifles, and slipped into a sand cut along railroad tracks just south of the colony. As Tikas left the depot, he heard three explosions—Linderfelt said later that he detonated them as a signal, to call for reinforcements—and shooting broke out between the strikers and the militia. Some women ran with their children to a dry arroyo to the north, others to a pump station near the railroad tracks. But a number of women and children descended into pits that had been dug beneath their tents months before, soon after they moved to the colony. They were, after all, mining people; they felt secure underground.

The gunfire lasted all day. The militia shot dogs and chickens. One militiaman, one bystander, and several strikers fell. An eleven-year-old boy was picked off when he and his parents emerged from their cellar during an apparent lull. When a private car was commandeered to transport a machine gun, one of the civilians in it overheard an order "to drive everyone out and burn the colony." And, just after seven o'clock, the brakeman of a southbound train passing the colony saw a man in uniform setting fire to a tent. Andrews considers the arson "a matter of speculation," but most historians fault the guards for the fire, and all witnesses agreed that the camp was soon ablaze. Around the time that the fire started, Linderfelt led a charge into the camp. (His men were seen plundering an

accordion, a sewing machine, a suitcase, an umbrella, and a bicycle.) Only once they had penetrated the camp, Linderfelt later claimed, did he realize that people were hiding in the pits beneath their tents. He also claimed that his men tried bravely to rescue them, but, if so, they never looked in the cellar of tent No. 58, where four women and eleven children had taken refuge. "The tent over us caught fire and blazed up big and the smoke commenced to come down on top of us," a survivor later recalled. "The bigger children tried to climb up out of the cellar, and they took hold of the burning floor, and their little fingers were burned and they fell back on top of us." The women and children lapsed into unconsciousness. One woman came to and escaped the pit later that night; another got out the next morning, when soldiers were again seen setting fire to the tents. Smoke suffocated the rest.

Shortly after Linderfelt entered the camp, Tikas and two other strikers were brought before him as captives. Linderfelt cracked his rifle over Tikas's head so hard that he exposed bone in his skull and snapped the rifle's stock. A sergeant later told a military investigator under oath that Linderfelt then ordered Tikas's execution, though the charge was never proved. Several historians believe that militiamen told Tikas and his friends to run and then shot them in the back. The bodies lay exposed for three days.

For a week and a half, strikers took revenge. Crying "Remember Ludlow!" they dynamited, looted, burned, and otherwise destroyed at least half a dozen mines. By the time federal troops arrived, they had more or less evened the kill.

In the month following the massacre, Upton Sinclair sent the Ludlow women and children on a tour that reached Woodrow Wilson's White House, but the union gave up the strike in December, financially exhausted. Rockefeller, whom the violence had at last embarrassed, hired a publicist to spin the disaster and a labor-relations specialist to fix it. Bowers was quietly retired. "My hope is that I am progressing," Rockefeller told a federal commission in January, 1915. He intended to let workers elect representatives within C.F. & I. to raise grievances with management. The federal commission condemned the plan for a company union as "an instance of that handing down of favors in which autocrats



"Present" is not an appropriate response."

have always delighted," but that fall Rockefeller danced with coal miners' wives in a schoolroom in southern Colorado, and he seemed to have prevailed.

The legacy of Ludlow is not easy to discern. Andrews notes that, in the aftermath, neither side cared to remember the workers' armed rebellion. The union seems to have preferred to imagine its martyrs pure, and the mine owners may have been reluctant to spread the news that workers had fought back with bullets and torches and got away with it. But one can perhaps still see traces of the conflict in today's political rhetoric. One of the few whom Rockefeller failed to charm was the union leader John Lawson, who caricatured the philanthropist as offering "health for China, a refuge for birds, food for the Belgians, pensions for New York widows, university training for the elect, and never a thought of a dollar for the thousands of men, women, and children who starved in Colorado." Here, perhaps, is the real-life antecedent of the phony-hearted liberal elitist who stalks the prose of right-wing pundits today. And Ludlow may also be the source of this figure's complement, the worker whose only political instinct is to distrust government. At Ludlow, after all, strikers tied red bandannas around their throats for a uniform and were called rednecks. For good reason, they were wary of the state—it was shooting at them.

In the end, though, government was the redneck's ally and even his salvation. Without the intervention of federal troops, trusted by both sides to behave neutrally, the coal war would almost certainly have lasted longer and taken even more lives. It was a federal bureaucrat who praised the miners' effort as "a strike of the twentieth century against the tenth-century mental attitude." After a journalist was murdered for trying to expose the Ludlow sheriff's political corruptions, a federal district attorney called it "a political killing," and the Colorado Supreme Court deposed the sheriff, writing of his vote rigging that "no more fraudulent and infamous prostitution of the ballot is conceivable."

In other words, the lesson of Ludlow may be that, in the pursuit of energy and in combats between capital and labor, there is one more force to reckon with. When a representative democracy wins people's trust, it is capable of moderating disputes among corporations, the market, and the individual. Time suggests that nothing else can take its place, though from time to time corporations have offered to do so. According to Andrews, most of the open camps of southern Colorado still survive and have grown into towns, though some are struggling. But you can't even find the ruins of most of the company-owned closed camps without a good map. ♦

ON TELEVISION

ALTERED STATES

Toni Collette juggles identities in a new Showtime series.

BY NANCY FRANKLIN



Showtime's two creepy-guy series, "Californication" (sex addict) and "Dexter" (serial killer), finished their seasons in December, making way for a trio of troubled-women shows—a new series and new seasons of two existing series—that begin this Sunday. In the premiere of "The L Word" 's sixth and final season, the body of Jenny, a writer whose turn toward lesbianism provided the original story line of the show, is pulled from a swimming pool, and some of her friends are under suspicion; in "Secret Diary of a Call Girl," a young woman in London leads a problematic double life as a regular gal and as a good-time gal; and in the new series, "United States of Tara," Toni Collette plays a woman with dissociative identity disorder (the term now sanctioned by the American Psychiatric Association for what used to be called multiple personality disorder).

"United States of Tara" has a noteworthy parentage: it was created by Diablo Cody, who won an Academy Award for the screenplay of the hit movie "Juno" (along with a supersize Praise-and-Scorn Combo Platter from the press, for being an overnight success and for using that dumb name), and Steven Spielberg is one of its executive producers; Cody is also an executive producer, and wrote the first three episodes. "Juno" 's story of a teenager's pregnancy had an over-all affectlessness to it—you couldn't tell whether you were supposed to think that the pregnancy was no big deal or whether its being no big deal was a comment on the kind of culture that leads to kids getting pregnant. The movie's cool-loser-hipster tone gave it a tough skin. "Tara," unlike "Juno," is not a vacuum wrapped in an attitude inside a hoodie; and it benefits from hav-

ing a central performer who, like Meryl Streep, has the ability both to disappear into a role and to persuade us that, whatever character she's playing, she's showing us her core. In "Tara," Collette is a Kansas housewife who creates "opulent environments" for women with too much money on their hands; the mayor's wife, Tara tells us, recently hired her to design "a seventeenth-century rococo nursery." She says this in an introduction, which she is videotaping as she sits on a bed, and one might reasonably think, Oh, Lord, please, no. No characters filming themselves talking to the camera, *please*. But luckily the scene is soon over. "Tara" isn't—yay!—clogged with self-consciousness; Tara films herself in order to keep track of her life, and remember where she left off, so to speak, when one of her other identities—one of her "alters"—takes over.

What makes "Tara" unusual is that D.I.D. isn't treated as frightening and isolating, as a medical conundrum, or as the shortest route to laughs. Tara's alternate identities are accepted by her family and by the community, and, in a way, she's just the town eccentric. There are three distinct alters, all of them disruptive to the normal order of things, but Tara's teen-age kids, Marshall and Kate (Keir Gilchrist and Brie Larson), barely bat an eye at their doings. The first one we meet is T, a sluttish, smart-mouthed fifteen-year-old. She's Kate's favorite, and is, like her, dismissive of Tara's mothering. Kate enjoys T's wildness; she herself has a flatter, Junoesque style, a compulsive epigrammatic disorder. Walking into the house after school, she calls out, "Yo. Is anybody home? Marshall? Estonian cleaning lady? Mommy?" Tara's husband, Max (John Corbett), a member of that strange breed of TV husband that exhibits infinite patience, essentially has to juggle four wives, only one of whom he's allowed to have sex with, because even though the alters share the house and his bed, and are in his wife's body, none of them are his wife. Toward the end of the first episode, we meet—stand back—Buck, a loud, beer-drinking, profane, homophobic, trucker-cap-wearing troublemaker, who calls Marshall "Marsha" and gets into fistfights. Buck isn't a lesbian; Buck is a man—he accounts for his missing penis by claiming that it was shot off in Vietnam. Then there's Alice, who is right out of "Desperate Housewives," a bustling, repressed homemaker, in a prim flowered

The four faces of Tara: Collette as Tara, Alice, Buck, and T.

LARA TOMLIN

dress and a starched apron. She brings order to the household and is a personified rebuke to Tara. Marshall and Alice have a bond; he finds her reassuring, especially after she cuts a punitive teacher of his down to size.

All three non-Taras seem to have a place in the family, but Tara herself doesn't altogether know where she belongs. She genuinely can't collect herself, though the stresses in her life that trigger the shifts to T, or Alice, or Buck, are not uncommon ones: her daughter starts having sex; Marshall is all gummed up with adolescent impulses that he doesn't understand; and her love life isn't what it used to be. There's a rationale for each alter, but I don't really know what the show as a whole is up to—whether each of Tara's alters is meant to be seen as a missing part of her, or whether the show is a *tableau vivant* illustrating that it is the lot of all human beings to have their needs unmet, and that even united states are imperfect unions. Or perhaps "Tara" just is what it is: a story about a woman with D.I.D., period. The three alters are broad stereotypes, but Collette makes the moments of transition surprisingly touching, and sometimes subtly comic. Her ability to transform herself extends even to her physique: when she's Tara, her head seems delicate, wedge-shaped; when she's Buck, it's a blocky oblong. Collette is impressively convincing, even though I'm not entirely sure what I'm being convinced of.

"The Beast," an F.B.I. drama set in Chicago, on A&E, has received more attention than would normally be paid to an upcoming crime drama, not because of the show's particular merits but

because of the health of its star, Patrick Swayze. A year ago, after filming the pilot, Swayze was found to have pancreatic cancer. Amazingly, he was able to—and wanted to—continue with the show, working long hours during the week and undergoing treatment on weekends. At fifty-six, and with a terrible illness, Swayze still has his characteristic alertness as a performer; he has that fresh, new-boyfriend smell about him, even as he plays a rather heavy, noirish role, as Charles Barker, a veteran agent who is suspected by his superiors of being involved in something shady. In order to build their case, they give him a young, green partner, Ellis Dove (Travis Fimmel), whom they pressure into watching him for missteps. The younger man is put off, at first, by Barker's gruffness, not to mention the fact that Barker thinks nothing of shooting Dove in order to protect their cover on the job. But it isn't long before Dove is converted to Barker worship, lapping up life lessons from old Grumpy McGrumperson. The show intends, I believe, to convey more weariness on Barker's part, and more ambivalence on Dove's, but all these relationships—law enforcers' with one another, with the people they are trying to bust or protect, and with the law itself—were portrayed so much more powerfully in FX's "The Shield," which keeps coming to mind as you watch Barker knock heads and throw away the rule book. The characterizations in "The Beast" show very little imagination; as for the plots, haven't we seen enough shows in which agents reveal their sterling natures by freeing Eastern European sex slaves?

Barker has his secrets and his sad-nesses, as we learn when we see a picture of a little girl on his computer. In case we missed the point that he's making up for something that he's lost, we see the girl again, in his mind's eye, as he looks at a sick little boy—as if the sight of a child who's been victimized to the point of near-death weren't enough in itself to fire him up. Explaining to Dove his reasons for going beyond the call of duty, Barker says, "Bottom line... you don't make it your call, you'll wake up twenty years from now wondering why you did any of it, and your life is nothing but a big joke." Barely has this cliché had a chance to cool when Barker delivers another, as he tells Dove not to get romantically involved with anyone. "No excess baggage, nothing you can't leave behind," he counsels.

Fimmel, as a foil to Swayze, doesn't help matters. Although he's almost thirty, he hasn't yet been around the block as an actor (he has, however, been up on billboards, in a number of Calvin Klein underwear ads, one of which, in London, literally stopped traffic and had to be taken down); his main credit is playing Tarzan in a short-lived series five years ago. His expressions are those of a person whose face itches but whose hands are tied, and all he can do is twitch until the feeling goes away. Swayze, though, is appealing in "The Beast," despite the weaknesses all around him; his face is craggier and more attractive than it was twenty years ago, his eyes less squinty and more open. It's the face of a man who has, to understate the case, seen a few things. ♦

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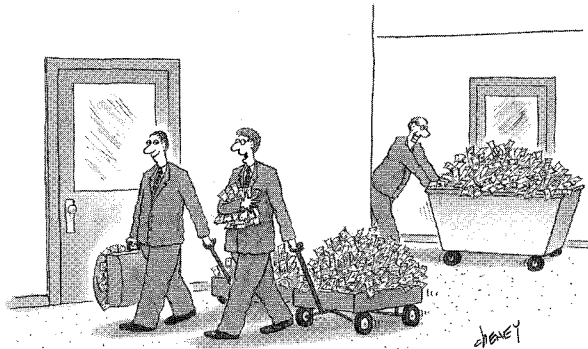
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CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Leo Cullum, must be received by Sunday, January 18th. Finalists in the January 5th contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the February 2nd issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"At the next bailout, let's also ask for a pony."
Lynn Tudor, New York City



THE FINALISTS

*"In this economy, you have to let
the vacation come to you."*
Michael Soskis, Cambridge, Mass.

"He's pretty much up for anything."
Kevin Kozee, Marietta, Ga.

"He has recreational A.D.D."
Mark Kane, Bayside, N.Y.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



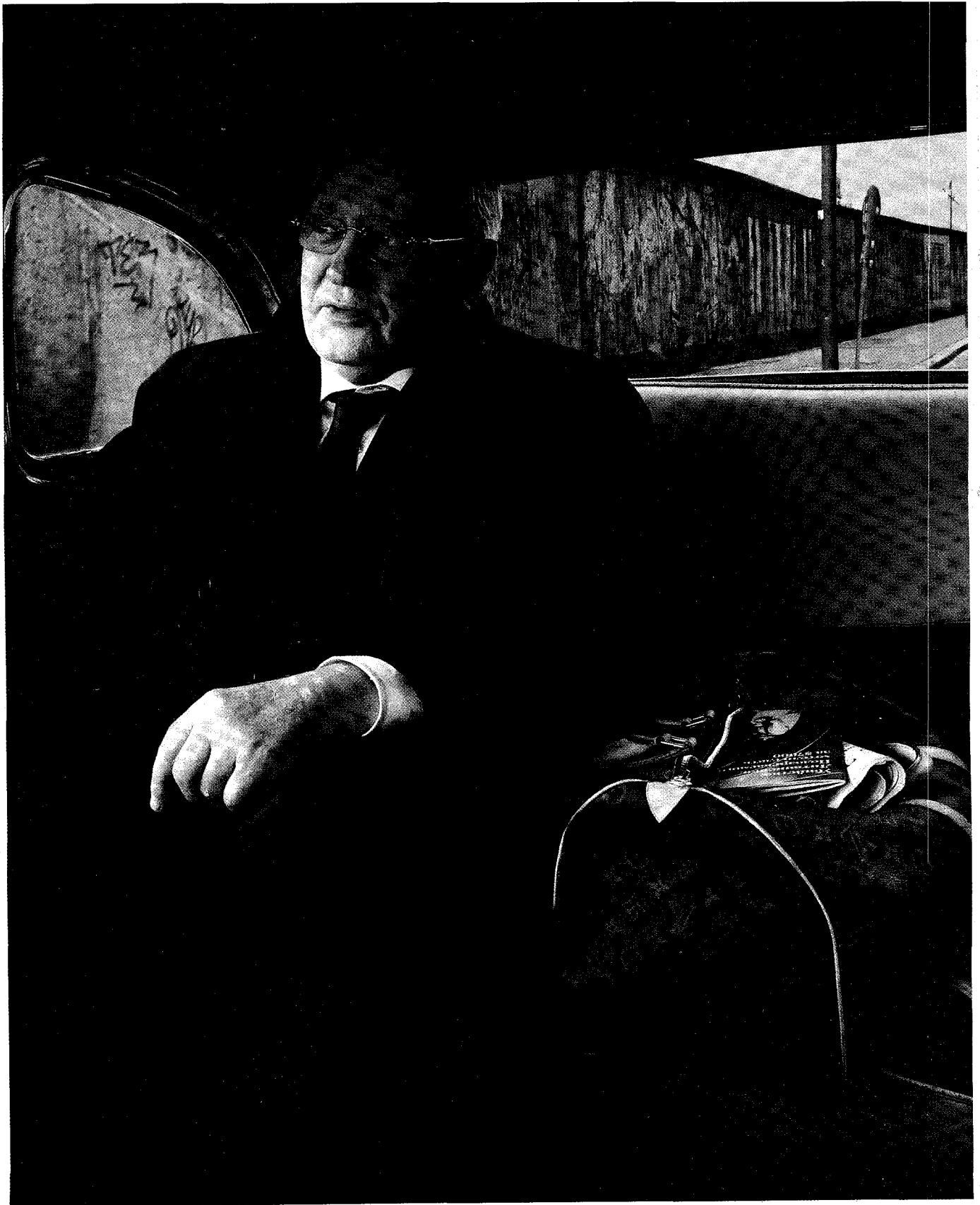
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